

Harry – gefangen in der Zeit

Begleitmaterialien

Episode 080 – Grammar

Rules of thumb for forming the plural

Determining the plural form of nouns isn't always easy. Do you remember when Harry said the following?

Example:

Harry: *Gibt es in Deutschland viele **Stau**e?*

Anna: *Du meinst **Staus**? Ja, leider gibt es viele Staus in Deutschland.*

Harry chose a plural form that was in fact wrong, but could be right in theory because most monosyllabic masculine nouns take an "e" at the end to form the plural. You've already learned that there are five different ways of forming the plural of a noun. Three of those ways include the additional possibility of adding an umlaut as well.

1. Plural ending **-e** or **-e + Umlaut**

	Singular	Plural -e	Singular	Plural -e + Umlaut
-e	<i>das Angebot</i>	<i>die Angebote</i>	<i>die Hand</i>	<i>die Hände</i>

2. Plural ending **-en** or **-n** (if the last letter of the noun is already an **-e**)

	Singular	Plural -en	Singular	Plural -n (bei Substantiven, die auf -e enden)
-en or -n	<i>die Meldung</i>	<i>die Meldungen</i>	<i>die Raststätte</i>	<i>die Raststätten</i>

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3. Plural ending **-er** or **-er + Umlaut**

-er	Singular <i>das Kind</i>	Plural -er <i>die Kinder</i>	Singular <i>das Haus</i>	Plural -er + Umlaut <i>die Häuser</i>
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4. Plural ending **-s**

-s	Singular <i>das Auto</i>	Plural -s <i>die Autos</i>
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5. No ending in the plural or no ending + Umlaut

- (endungslos)	Singular <i>das Zimmer</i>	Plural - <i>die Zimmer</i>	Singular <i>die Tochter</i>	Plural - + Umlaut <i>die Töchter</i>
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So which endings to use for which nouns? There are a few general rules, but they don't apply in all cases. So there are many exceptions. Nonetheless, they can help you to a certain extent:

The plural of monosyllabic nouns are frequently formed by adding

-e to the end of masculine nouns: *der Mord – die Morde*

-en to the end of feminine nouns: *die Frau – die Frauen*

-e or **-er** to the end of neuter nouns: *das Jahr – die Jahre*, *das Schild – die Schilder*

The plural of many loanwords is formed by adding an "s" to the end:

der Job – die Jobs

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das Taxi – die Taxis

Nouns that end with "e" often get an "n" to form the plural:

der Name – die Namen

die Torte – die Torten

Nouns that end with "er", "el" and "en" frequently take

– no ending for masculine nouns: der Bankräuber – die Bankräuber

- **n** for feminine nouns: die Zwiebel – die Zwiebel**n**

– no ending for neuter nouns: das Zimmer – die Zimmer