

Plurals and compound words

Objective

To explore plural inflections and investigate the structure of compound words, using this knowledge to help spelling.

Background knowledge

Some nouns are *countable* and others are *uncountable*. Countable nouns have a plural form, whereas uncountable nouns do not. The children will revise and practise some rules or patterns on how nouns turn into their plural form. New words are created in a number of ways: compounding (at least two root words in the morphology), blending (parts of two or more root words combine making a word that combines the meaning of both roots) and clipping (a shortened word whose meaning is unchanged from the original). This section focuses on compound words. Some compounds appear as two words, a single or hyphenated word – this may change over time. In other cases, the hyphen indicates that the words form a unit with a meaning separate to the words individually: *a light, blue chair* or *a light-blue chair*.

Activities

● Photocopiable page 64 'Adding s, es and ves'

In this activity the children do word sums to practise plurals of words ending in 'sh', 'ch', 'x' and 'ss' adding 'es'. Note that some words ending in 'ch' with the /k/ sound only add 's'. The sheet also covers the plurals where words ending in 'f' or 'fe' drop it to add 'ves'. Note that there are exceptions to this rule, and some can be spelled either way: words ending in 'ff' just add 's'. Some words ending in 'o' just add 's'.

● Photocopiable page 65 'Plural rules'

Before they start the crossword, revise regular pluralisation rules on the board and discuss irregular plurals, such as *scissors*, *mice*. The answers to the crossword clues are plural nouns covering the various rules together with a few irregular plurals.

● Photocopiable page 66 'Compound word battleships'

For this two-player game, give each child a copy of the grid and a set of root words. Ask them to make five compound words by combining their root words and then to write them on the grid, vertically or horizontally. Once ready, they call out coordinates to each other. If the coordinate has a word on it, it is a hit: the letter and its root word must be called out. The attacker then has another turn to try to hit the conjoining root word. If they do, the defender says the root word. The attacker sinks the ship if they correctly guess the compound word. If they miss or guess wrongly, the other player has a turn. The winner is the first player to sink all their opponent's compound words.

Further ideas

● **Perplexing plurals:** Challenge groups of children to create posters of nouns that have no singular (*scissors*), that are the same in the plural as in the singular (*sheep*), or that are irregular in the plural (*tooth – teeth; child – children*).

● **Plural challenge:** Divide the class into teams and give each team a set of pluralisation cards such as + 'es', drop 'y' + 'ies', + 's', drop 'f' + 'ves', and a joker (for exceptions). Prepare a list of nouns to call out or hold up. Each team displays the ending it thinks is correct, gaining a point for each correct answer – the first team to 20 points wins.

● **Bingo:** Challenge the children to make their own version of bingo with compound words. The caller could read out compound words and the other children could have the root words written on their cards.

Digital content

On the digital component you will find:

- Printable versions of all three photocopiable pages.
- Answers to all three photocopiable pages.
- Interactive version of 'Adding s, es and ves'.

Plurals and compound words

Adding s, es and ves

■ Do these word sums to make plural answers. Remember to use the plural spelling rules.

■ Make up and illustrate your own word sums in the blank spaces.

one  + one  = two _____

one  + one  = two _____

one  + one  = two _____

one  + one  = two _____

one  + one  = two _____

one  + one  = two _____

one  + one  = two _____

one  + one  = two _____

one  + one  = two _____

one + one = two _____

one + one = two _____

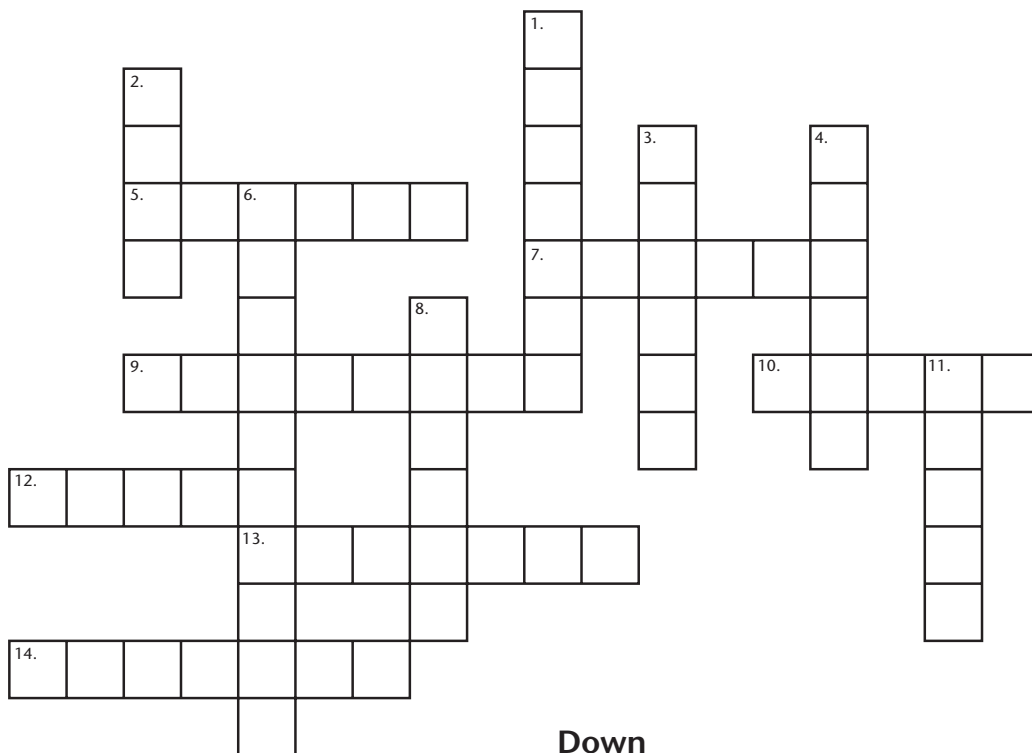
■ Write the rules you came across on a piece of paper or in your notebook.

Plurals and compound words

Plural rules

■ Complete this crossword by making plurals from the words in the word bank at the bottom of the page. All the answers are plural nouns.

Tip: Remember the plural rules and watch out for exceptions.



Across

- 5. Steep rocks by the sea (6)
- 7. Tricks or deceptions (6)
- 9. Kings or queens (8)
- 10. Large water birds with webbed feet (5)
- 12. Thick-leaved desert plants that store water (5)
- 13. People who steal things (7)
- 14. Animals with long ears that look like a small horse (7)

Down

- 1. Buses used on long journeys (7)
- 2. Small, furry animals with a long tail (4)
- 3. Keyboard instruments with black and white keys (6)
- 4. Fairies often grant three of these (6)
- 6. Criminals often tried to hide theirs (who they are) (10)
- 8. Sounds that repeat because they are reflected (6)
- 11. These animals give us wool (5)

identity	goose	hoax	piano	mouse
thief	monarch	cactus	echo	cliff
sheep	donkey	wish	coach	

Plurals and compound words

Compound word battleships

- Use your set of root words to make five compound words of your choice.
- Write your words into the grid, either vertically or horizontally.
- Use your words to play battleships with a partner.

Tip: Remember to hide your grid from your partner.

m												
l												
k												
j												
i												
h												
g												
f												
e												
d												
c												
b												
a												
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12



Root words – set 1	
proof	honey
comb	light
brief	hood
child	ground
moon	chop
back	sound
stick	case



Root words – set 2	
knife	work
house	pen
dress	fall
break	day
night	head
home	play
ache	fast