

## THE PRONUNCIATION OF THE FINAL -S

**The pronunciation of the S in plurals, 3rd person singular verbs or genitive Saxon**

The pronunciation of the final -S in plural words and verbs in the third person singular depends on the final consonant sound before that S.

The ending is pronounced **/s/ after a voiceless sound**, it is pronounced **/z/ after a voiced sound** and is pronounced **/ɪz/ after a sibilant sound**:

- Voiceless: helps /ps/ -- sits /ts/ -- looks /ks/
- Voiced: crabs /bz/ -- words /dz/ -- gloves /vz/,
- Sibilant: buses /sɪz / , bridges /dʒɪz / or wishes /ʃɪz /

### 1. The /ɪz/ sound

If the last consonant sound of the word is a sibilant sound, the final -S is pronounced as /ɪz/. This /ɪz/ sound is pronounced like an extra syllable

Examples of words ending in the /ɪz/ sound:

- -CE: races (sounds like "race-iz"), embraces, places, convinces
- -S / SE: buses, gases, rises, pauses, nurses
- -X: fixes, mixes, boxes, taxes
- -ZE: amazes, freezes, prizes, quizzes, seizes
- -SS: kisses, misses, passes, bosses, glasses, dresses
- -CH: churches, sandwiches, witches, teaches, watches, reaches
- -SH: dishes, eyelashes, hairbrushes, wishes, pushes, crashes,
- -GE: garages, wages, changes, ages, judges, arranges, challenges

Remember: after verbs ending in -sh, -ch, -s, -o, -ss and -x, we add the -es to the end of the verb (in third person) and the pronunciation is /ɪz/ as an extra syllable.

## 2. The /s/ sound

If the last consonant of the word is voiceless, then the -S is pronounced as /s/

NOTE: The consonants c, s, sh, ch and x are voiceless though they use the sibilants ending seen above. Examples of words ending in the /s/ sound:

- -P/ PE : cups, stops, sleeps, landscapes, types, telescopes
- -T/ TE: hats, students, hits, writes, graduates, institutes
- -K/ KE: cooks, books, drinks, walks, likes, snakes
- -F: cliffs, sniffs, beliefs, laughs, graphs, apostrophes (the -gh and -ph here are pronounced like a F)
- -TH: myths, tablecloths, months (voiceless th /θ/), baths, earths

## 3. The /z/ sound

If the last letter of the words ends in a voiced consonant (or sound), then the -S is pronounced like a Z /z/(without creating another syllable). This Z sound is similar to the sound a bee makes zzzz

We also use this ending when the word ends in a vowel sound (e.g. bees, flies etc.) Examples of words ending in the /z/ sound:

- -B/ BE : crabs, rubs, describes, tubes
- -D/ DE : cards, words, rides, ends
- -G: rugs, bags, begs
- -L/ LE: deals calls, falls, hills, crocodiles, styles,
- -M/ ME: plums, dreams, times, comes
- -N/ NE: fans, drains, runs, pens, hormones, stones
- -NG: kings, belongs, sings, meanings, things
- -R/ RE: wears, cures, fires, signatures, figures

- -VE: gloves, wives, shelves, drives
- -Y: plays, cries, buys, boys, factories, says
- -THE: clothes, bathes, breathes
- -VOWEL SOUNDS: sees, seas, toes, photos