

The pronunciation of the S at the end of words

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

1. The /ɪz/ sound

If the last consonant sound of the word is a **sibilant sound** (a hissing or buzzing sound), the final S is pronounced as /ɪz/. This /ɪz/ sound is pronounced like an extra syllable. (e.g. the word *buses* has two syllables)

If the sound has a J sound (/dʒ/ like the letter J at the beginning of the word jacket or /ʒ/ like the S in pleasure), then the final S is also pronounced as /ɪz/.

Examples of words ending in the /ɪz/ sound:

- C: races (sounds like "race-iz")
- S: pauses, nurses, buses, rises
- X: fixes, boxes, hoaxes
- Z: amazes, freezes, prizes, quizzes
- SS: kisses, misses, passes, bosses
- CH: churches, sandwiches, witches, teaches
- SH: dishes, wishes, pushes, crashes
- GE: garages, changes, ages, judges

Remember: after verbs ending in -sh, -ch, -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/. Be careful not to create an extra syllable.

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: cups stops, sleeps
- T: hats, students, hits, writes
- K: cooks, books, drinks, walks
- F: cliffs, sniffs, beliefs, laughs, graphs (the -gh and -ph here are pronounced like a F)
- TH: myths, tablecloths, months (voiceless *th*)

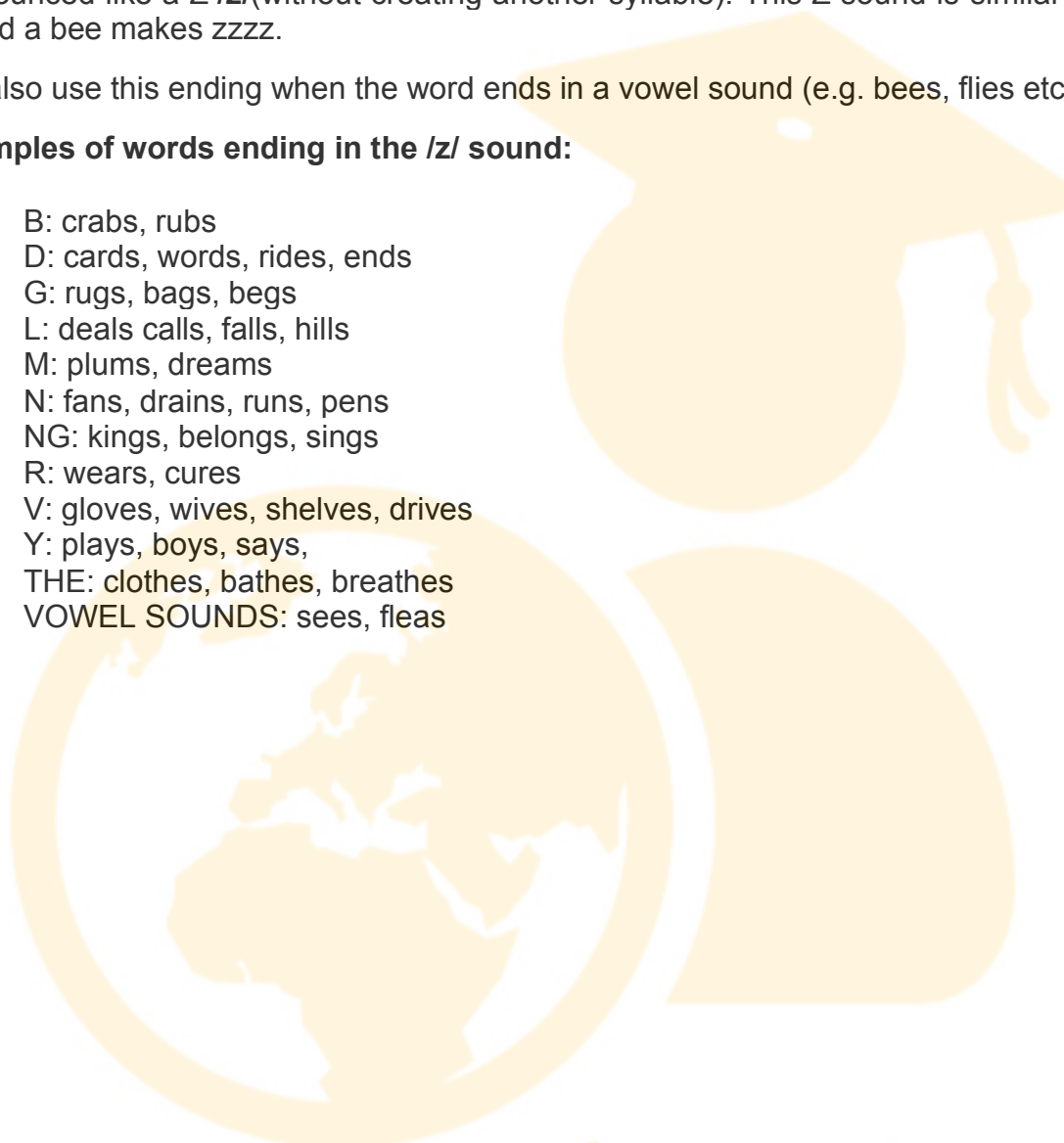
3. The /z/ sound

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: crabs, rubs
- D: cards, words, rides, ends
- G: rugs, bags, begs
- L: deals calls, falls, hills
- M: plums, dreams
- N: fans, drains, runs, pens
- NG: kings, belongs, sings
- R: wears, cures
- V: gloves, wives, shelves, drives
- Y: plays, boys, says,
- THE: clothes, bathes, breathes
- VOWEL SOUNDS: sees, fleas



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