

THE TERRIBLE "S"

Attached sheet for  
pronunciation drill

Based on the talk of the main speaker, Diane Larsen Freeman,  
director of ESOL, ELI, University of Michigan.

Hypothesis: "Patterns within grammar are not absolutely interchangeable  
frames."

-Diane Larsen Freeman

1. Add s to a count noun, singular:  
students windows sisters
2. But sometimes irregular in plural:  
mouse-mice woman-women ox-oxen
3. But plurals ending in x,z,ch,sh or s, add es:  
Kiss-kisses watch-watches wish-wishes fox-foxes
4. Third person singular in verbs:  
I go you go he goes I run you run he runs
5. Possessive form:  
That book is her's.
6. Some exceptions:  
mother-in-law- mothers-in-law knife-knives comedy-comedies

Here are some practice words:

- |                 |                         |                         |
|-----------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. potato _____ | 11. pen _____           | 21. child _____         |
| 2. boy _____    | 12. wife _____          | 22. fox _____           |
| 3. room _____   | 13. cap _____           | 23. sky _____           |
| 4. bush _____   | 14. church _____        | 24. foot _____          |
| 5. pencil _____ | 15. other _____         | 25. maid of honor _____ |
| 6. goose _____  | 16. lunch _____         |                         |
| 7. wish _____   | 17. father-in-law _____ |                         |
| 8. woman _____  | 18. match _____         |                         |
| 9. coat _____   | 19. army _____          |                         |
| 10. ox _____    | 20. nose _____          |                         |

ANSWERS

- |             |                    |                    |
|-------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1. potatoes | 11. pens           | 21. children       |
| 2. boys     | 12. wives          | 22. foxes          |
| 3. rooms    | 13. caps           | 23. skies          |
| 4. bushes   | 14. churches       | 24. feet           |
| 5. pencils  | 15. others         | 25. maids of honor |
| 6. geese    | 16. lunches        |                    |
| 7. wishes   | 17. fathers-in-law |                    |
| 8. women    | 18. matches        |                    |
| 9. coats    | 19. armies         |                    |
| 10. oxen    | 20. noses          |                    |

When the teacher says the infinitive form of the verb, please respond with third person singular:

Example:

to consist                      (he) consists

/s/

/z/

to accept  
to forget  
to attack  
to report  
to present  
to hope  
to look

to raise  
to choose  
to arrange  
to finish  
to discuss  
to catch  
to advise

When the teacher says the singular form of the noun, please respond with the plural form:

Example:

event                      events

/s/

/z/

steak  
defeat  
strike  
pipe  
boot  
ticket

opinion  
hotel  
radio  
manager  
blackboard  
bee

Practice these sentences:

1. Alice cooks steaks as tough as boots.
2. She uses matches to light her cigarettes.
3. A cat is supposed to have nine lives.
4. You're shaking like a leaf.
5. Suzie sells sea shells at St. Stephen's School.

**PRACTICE THESE SOUNDS AT HOME FOR HOMEWORK, PLEASE!**