Making plurals by adding ‘s’

Plural means more than one of something. Most plurals are formed by adding an ‘s’ to the singular, for example,

one shop becomes two shops
one car becomes ten cars

These are straightforward.

However there are some words that change spelling when ‘s’ is added. This exercise looks at what happens when ‘s’ is added to words that end in the letters ‘y’

For example  party + s = parties

If you have a problem remembering this, then this exercise is for you!

The answers to the exercises are on the last page.
Rules about words ending in y

To get the plural of words ending in ‘y’, there is a rule to remember.

If there is a **vowel** before the y, you just add ‘s’.

If there is a **consonant** before the ‘y’, drop the ‘y’ and add ‘ies’.

The 5 vowels are a e i o u. All the other letters are consonants.

**Vowel + y**

Here are some examples of words with a vowel before the ‘y’. To make these words plural, remember the rule is just to add ‘s’.

\[
\text{day} + s = \text{days} \quad \text{boy} + s = \text{boys} \quad \text{tray} + s = \text{trays}
\]

Can you think of other words ending in y which have a vowel before the y?
Write them below and add make them plural by adding ‘s’.

1__________      __________
2__________      __________
3__________      __________
Consonant + y

Can you remember what the rule says when there is a consonant before the ‘y’? You drop the ‘y’ and add ‘ies’. Before looking at some examples, check you know the consonants by writing them out. The first two are done for you. To check you have them all, count them. You should have 22 letters.

Exercise 1 – Write the consonants

b c___________________________________________

Exercise 2 – Underlining consonants

Here are some examples of words with a consonant before the ‘y’. Underline the consonant before the ‘y’.

  baby + s = babies       lady + s = ladies
  lorry + s = lorries     curry + s = curries

Now rewrite these sentences making the underlined word into the plural. Check if you need to change any other word to make sense.

  1. The union said the factory had to stay open.
     _____________________________________________

  2. The university has an open day in the spring.
     _____________________________________________
Exercise 3 – Making plurals

Make these words into plurals. Remember the RULE!

1. toy = toys
2. holiday =
3. diary =
4. jockey =
5. factory =
6. library =
7. family =
8. trolley =
9. allergy =
10. party =

Exercise 4 – The Rule

Remembering the rule is key to getting these spellings right. To check that you have it in the right order, fill in the blanks to make the rule.

‘ies’ vowel consonant ‘s’

If there is a ________ before the y, you just add ___.
If there is a ___________ before the ‘y’, drop the ‘y’ and add ____. 
**Exercise 5 - Choose the right word.**
*Write the sentence again using the right word.*

1. John hated going to Christmas *partys/parties* because he always had to drive.

2. There were two *lorries/lorrys* in the crash.

3. The fisherman put the *buoys/buoies* in the water.

4. All the *libraries/librarys* have computers which the public can use.

5. Children love school *holidays/holidaies* more than their parents.
Answers

Exercise 1 – List the consonants

b c d f g h j k l m n p q r s t v w x y z

(the 5 other letters are vowels – a e i o u)

Exercise 2 – Underlining consonants

baby + s = babies
lorry + s = lorries

lady + s = ladies
curry + s = curries

1. The union said the factories had to stay open.

2. The universities have an open day in the Spring.

Exercise 3 – Making plurals

1. toy = toys
2. holiday = holidays
3. diary = diaries
4. jockey = jockeys
5. factory = factories
6. library = libraries
7. family = families
8. trolley = trolleys
9. allergy = allergies
10. party = parties
Exercise 4 – The Rule

‘ies’ vowel consonant ‘s’

If there is a vowel before the y, you just add ‘s’.

If there is a consonant before the ‘y’, drop the ‘y’ and add ‘ies’.

Exercise 5 - Choose the right word.

1. John hated going to Christmas parties because he always had to drive.
2. There were two lorries in the crash.
3. The fisherman put the buoys in the water.
4. All the libraries have computers which the public can use.
5. Children love school holidays more than their parents.