

Pronunciation of final -S



Week 2

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Voiced vs Voiceless

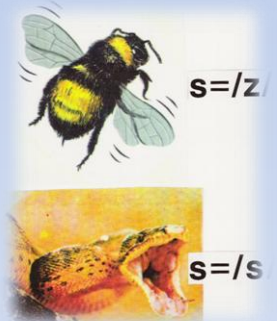
A **voiced** consonant (or sound) means that it uses the vocal cords and they produce **a vibration** or humming sound in the throat when they are said. Put your finger on your throat and then pronounce the letter L. You will notice a slight vibration in your neck / throat. That is because it is a **voiced** sound.

A **voiceless** sound (sometimes called unvoiced sound) is when there is **no vibration** in your throat and the sound comes from the mouth area. Pronounce the letter P. You will notice how it comes from your mouth (in fact near your lips at the front of your mouth). The P sound doesn't come from your throat.

Sibilant sounds

Another sound which is relevant to this is the **sibilant sound** which is produced by forcing air out toward your teeth. It is characterized by a hissing sound (**sssss**), a buzzing sound (**zzzzz**) or the sound teachers make when they want you to be quiet (**shhhh!**).

- **Z** like the sound a bee makes... zzzzzz
- **S** like the sound a snake makes... ssssss
- **SH** like the sound a teacher makes when they want you to be quiet... shhhh



Pronunciation of final S

The pronunciation of the final S in plural words and verbs in the third person depend 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 / or /əz/** after a **sibilant sound**:

- **Voiceless**: help**s** /ps/ -- sit**s** /ts/ -- look**s** /ks/
- **Voiced**: crab**s** /bz/ -- word**s** /dz/ -- glove**s** /vz/,
- **Sibilant**: bus**e**s /zɪz / or /zəz /, bridg**e**s /dʒɪz / or /dʒəz /, wish**e**s /ʃɪz / or /ʃəz /

1. 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.

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, apostrophes
(the *-gh* and *-ph* here are pronounced like a F)

TH: myths, tablecloths, months (voiceless *th*)

2. 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:

VOWEL SOUNDS: sees, fleas

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



3. The /ɪz/ sound (or /əz/ 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)

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.

The pronunciation of words ending in S depends on the final consonant (sound). There are three ways to pronounce the S:

/iz/

SIBILANT

C	races
S	buses
X	boxes
Z	prizes
SS	kisses
CH	watches
SH	dishes
GE	changes

Sibilant Sound
a hissing or
buzzing sound

/s/

VOICELESS

P	sleeps
K	books
T	hats
F	cliff
PH	graphs
TH	myths

Voiced Sound
uses the vocal cords
and it produces a
vibration or humming
sound in the throat

/z/

VOICED

B	crabs
D	words
G	bags
L	deals
M	dreams
N	fans
NG	sings
R	wears
V	gloves
Y	plays