



## Plural Nouns: Compound Noun Plurals

Fill in the blank with the correct option.

- All of her \_\_\_ came to the wedding.  
a) sister-in-laws  
b) sisters-in-law  
c) sisters-in-laws  
d) sister-in-law
- Two \_\_\_ stopped to watch the street performer.  
a) passer-bys  
b) passer-bies  
c) passers-by  
d) passers-bys
- The \_\_\_ received silver medals at the ceremony.  
a) runners-up  
b) runner-ups  
c) runners-ups  
d) runner-up
- The magazine has had three \_\_\_ in the past decade.  
a) editor-in-chiefs  
b) editors-in-chiefs  
c) editor-in-chieves  
d) editors-in-chief
- Both of my \_\_\_ are dentists.  
a) brother-in-laws  
b) brothers-in-laws  
c) brothers-in-law  
d) brother-in-law
- The \_\_\_ stood at the back of the crowd, watching silently.  
a) lookers-on  
b) looker-ons  
c) lookers-ons  
d) looker-on
- The politician could not shake off the \_\_\_\_\_.  
a) hanger-ons  
b) hangers-on  
c) hangers-ons  
d) hanger-on
- Add two \_\_\_ of sugar to the mixture.  
a) spoonsful  
b) spoonsfuls  
c) spoonful  
d) spoonfuls
- She grabbed \_\_\_ of sand and let them slip through her fingers.  
a) handsful  
b) handsfuls  
c) handfuls  
d) handful
- Pour three \_\_\_ of water into the pot.  
a) cupfuls  
b) cupsful  
c) cupsfuls  
d) cupful
- The \_\_\_ stood up when the lady entered the room.  
a) gentlemans  
b) gentlemen  
c) gentlemens  
d) gentlemanses

12. Three \_\_\_\_ joined the police force this year.  
 a) policewomans  
 b) policewomens  
 c) policewoman  
 d) policewomen
13. The party was attended by children and \_\_\_\_.  
 a) grown-up  
 b) grows-up  
 c) grown-ups  
 d) grows-ups
14. She planted \_\_\_\_ along the garden path.  
 a) forget-me-nots  
 b) forgets-me-not  
 c) forget-me-not  
 d) forgets-me-nots
15. The children enjoyed the \_\_\_\_ at the fair.  
 a) merry-go-round  
 b) merry-go-rounds  
 c) merries-go-round  
 d) merries-go-rounds
16. All \_\_\_\_ were cancelled due to the heavy fog.  
 a) takes-off  
 b) takes-offs  
 c) take-off  
 d) take-offs
17. The bathroom has two \_\_\_\_.  
 a) toothbrushs  
 b) teethbrushes  
 c) toothbrushes  
 d) teethbrushs
18. We installed new \_\_\_\_ in the study.  
 a) bookshelves  
 b) bookshelfes  
 c) bookshelfs  
 d) booksshelves
19. Several \_\_\_\_ were repairing their nets by the river.  
 a) fishermans  
 b) fishermen  
 c) fishermens  
 d) fishersman
20. His \_\_\_\_ organised a surprise party for him.  
 a) daughter-in-laws  
 b) daughters-in-laws  
 c) daughter-in-law  
 d) daughters-in-law



## Answers

1. b) sisters-in-law
2. c) passers-by
3. a) runners-up
4. d) editors-in-chief
5. c) brothers-in-law
6. a) lookers-on
7. b) hangers-on
8. d) spoonfuls
9. c) handfuls
10. a) cupfuls
11. b) gentlemen
12. d) policewomen
13. c) grown-ups
14. a) forget-me-nots
15. b) merry-go-rounds
16. d) take-offs
17. c) toothbrushes
18. a) bookshelves
19. b) fishermen
20. d) daughters-in-law



# Explanations

## 1. “sisters-in-law” (b)

In hyphenated compound nouns, pluralise the main noun (head noun). 'Sister' is the main noun: sister-in-law → sisters-in-law.

## 2. “passers-by” (c)

In hyphenated compound nouns, pluralise the main noun. 'Passer' is the main noun: passer-by → passers-by.

## 3. “runners-up” (a)

In hyphenated compound nouns, pluralise the main noun. 'Runner' is the main noun: runner-up → runners-up.

## 4. “editors-in-chief” (d)

In hyphenated compound nouns, pluralise the main noun. 'Editor' is the main noun: editor-in-chief → editors-in-chief.

## 5. “brothers-in-law” (c)

In hyphenated compound nouns, pluralise the main noun. 'Brother' is the main noun: brother-in-law → brothers-in-law.

## 6. “lookers-on” (a)

In hyphenated compound nouns, pluralise the main noun. 'Looker' is the main noun: looker-on → lookers-on.

## 7. “hangers-on” (b)

In hyphenated compound nouns, pluralise the main noun. 'Hanger' is the main noun: hanger-on → hangers-on.

## 8. “spoonfuls” (d)

Compound nouns ending in -ful form the plural by adding -s at the end: spoonful → spoonfuls.

## 9. “handfuls” (c)

Compound nouns ending in -ful form the plural by adding -s at the end: handful → handfuls.

## 10. “cupfuls” (a)

Compound nouns ending in -ful form the plural by adding -s at the end: cupful → cupfuls.

## 11. “gentlemen” (b)

When a compound noun contains 'man', change 'man' to 'men' for the plural: gentleman → gentlemen.

## 12. “policewomen” (d)

When a compound noun contains 'woman', change 'woman' to 'women' for the plural: policewoman → policewomen.

## 13. “grown-ups” (c)

When no word in the compound is clearly the head noun, add -s at the end: grown-up → grown-ups.

## 14. “forget-me-nots” (a)

In compound nouns built from a phrase, add -s at the end: forget-me-not → forget-me-nots.

## 15. “merry-go-rounds” (b)

In compound nouns built from a phrase, add -s at the end: merry-go-round → merry-go-rounds.

## 16. “take-offs” (d)

In verb-based compound nouns (phrasal verb origins), add -s at the end: take-off → take-offs.

**17. “toothbrushes” (c)**

In solid compound nouns, pluralise the last word only: toothbrush → toothbrushes. The first part 'tooth' does not change.

**18. “bookshelves” (a)**

In solid compound nouns, pluralise the last word. 'Shelf' follows the -f to -ves rule: bookshelf → bookshelves.

**19. “fishermen” (b)**

When a compound noun contains 'man', change 'man' to 'men' for the plural: fisherman → fishermen.

**20. “daughters-in-law” (d)**

In hyphenated compound nouns, pluralise the main noun. 'Daughter' is the main noun: daughter-in-law → daughters-in-law.