

How many syllables? (-es)

(Focus: Syllables in words)

Task 1

How many syllables are there in these words?

Example:

ages 2

behaves _____
brushes _____
catches _____
classes _____
confuses _____
decides _____
faces _____
glasses _____
inches _____
languages _____
messages _____
notices _____
pages _____
promises _____
sales _____
services _____
voices _____

Task 2

Practise saying the words in these sentences.

- I haven't seen you for ages!
- Look at him – he always behaves as if he owns the place.
- How many toothbrushes do you think you get through in a lifetime?
- She might be here soon – she sometimes catches the five o'clock train.
- Do you think school classes are getting any smaller?
- Don't try to explain how it works – it just confuses me.
- Who decides who's going to be invited?
- The room's got a good view – it faces the square.
- Can you see any familiar faces on this photo?
- I can't find my glasses.
- How many inches are there in a foot?
- What languages do they teach at your school?
- Are there any messages for me?
- Nobody notices how the place is changing.

- People shouldn't stick notices on this wall.
- How many pages have you read?
- Don't make promises you can't keep.
- Everyone promises to arrive on time but no one ever does.
- Look what I bought in the sales.
- You need to go to Customer Services.
- Sssh ! I can hear voices!

Key for task 1

ages	2
behaves	2
brushes	2
catches	2
classes	2
confuses	3
decides	2
faces	2
glasses	2
inches	2
languages	3
messages	3
notices	3
pages	2
promises	3
sales	1
services	3
voices	2

Comments

Some learners have trouble knowing when to pronounce –es at the end of nouns and verbs as a separate syllable. The –es should only form a separate syllable after:

- the 's' sound as in 'class'
- the 'z' sound as in 'confuse'
- the 'sh' sound as in 'wish'
- the 'tch' sound as in 'catch'
- the 'g' sound as in 'page'

We could add the sound that occurs in the middle of 'vision'. This is rare at the end of words, but some people pronounce the word 'garage', for example, with this sound – 'garages' has three syllables.