The English language is, in my opinion, designed to make grammar spelling as difficult as possible. Remember that for each of these “rules,” there are probably a multitude of exceptions that break the “rules.” This list is not intended to be anywhere near complete/comprehensive and is, unfortunately, in no particular order...

### Changing a Singular Nouns to a Plural Noun

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If the noun...</th>
<th>Do this...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| is your average, everyday noun (most nouns) | just add –s  
Examples: book → books; camera → cameras; dog → dogs |
| ends with s, x, ch, or sh | add –es  
Examples: box → boxes; church → churches; wish → wishes |
| ends with a vowel + y  
Vowels: a, e, i, o, u | just add –s  
Examples: toy → toys; monkey → monkeys; day → days |
| ends with a consonant + y  
Consonant: NOT a, e, i, o, u | Change the y to i and add –es  
Examples: city → cities; family → families; baby → babies |
| is a “rule breaker” | memorize the plural form of the word  
Examples: child → children; [wo]man → [wo]men; foot → feet; tooth → teeth; mouse → mice; goose → geese; ox → oxen; deer → deer; sheep → sheep; moose → moose |

### Showing Ownership/Possession: Singular & Plural Possessive Nouns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If the noun...</th>
<th>Do this...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| is singular | add an apostrophe and s (‘s)  
• even if it already ends in s  
• don’t make the noun plural  
Examples: child’s balloon; Carlos’s money; fox’s bushy tail |
| is plural and ends with s | just add an apostrophe (’)  
Examples: the two coaches’ rules; the three brothers’ house |
| is plural and doesn’t end with s | add an apostrophe and s (‘s)  
Examples: the mice’s hole; the [wo]men’s table |
When Do I Double the Ending Consonant When Adding a Suffix?

- If the word is a **one**-syllable word (or a word in which the final syllable is stressed), **AND**
- If the word ends in **one** vowel followed by **one** consonant **AND**
- The suffix begins with a vowel (a, e, i, o, u, y)

**A Strange Math Equation to Help You Remember**

1 syllable + 1 vowel + 1 consonant = 2 (double the final consonant)

**Examples:**
drop → **dropped**, **dropping** (1 syllable, 1 vowel, 1 consonant → double final consonant)
fat → **fatter**, **fattest** (1 syllable, 1 vowel, 1 consonant → double final consonant)
fun → **funny** (1 syllable, 1 vowel, 1 consonant → double final consonant)
run → **runner**, **running** (1 syllable, 1 vowel, 1 consonant → double final consonant)
begin → **beginning** (2 syllables w/ final stressed, 1 vowel, 1 consonant → double final consonant)
jump → **jumped**, **jumping**, **jumper** (1 syllable, 1 vowel, 2 consonants → don’t double final consonant)
mail → **mailed**, **mailing** (2 syllables, 2 vowels, 1 consonant → don’t double final consonant)

**Subject ↔ Verb Agreement In a Present Tense Sentence**

A verb and the subject of a present-tense sentence must match... both must be singular or both must be plural.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If the subject...</th>
<th>Do this...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>is a singular noun or one of the pronouns: <strong>he</strong>, <strong>she</strong>, <strong>it</strong></td>
<td>add –s to the verb (see note below)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples: A <strong>dog</strong> <strong>wags</strong> its tail to show it is happy. <strong>It</strong> <strong>growls</strong> when it is mad.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is a plural noun or one of the pronouns: <strong>I</strong>, <strong>we</strong>, <strong>you</strong>, <strong>they</strong></td>
<td>do <strong>not</strong> add –s to the verb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples: People keep dogs as pets. <strong>They</strong> <strong>walk</strong> them every day.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** Actually the spelling rules for adding –s to present-tense verbs are very similar to the spelling rules for changing singular nouns to plural nouns (see above):
- For most verbs: just add –s (i.e. sing → **sings**, stay → **stays**)
- For verbs that end with s, x, z, ch, or sh: add –es (i.e. pitch → **pitches**, **buzz** → **buzzes**)
- For verbs that end with a consonant + y: Change the y to i and add –es (i.e. study → **studies**)

**Changing a Present Tense Verb to a Past Tense Verb**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If the verb...</th>
<th>Do this...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>is your average, everyday verb (most verbs)</td>
<td>just add –ed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples: play → <strong>played</strong>; call → <strong>called</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ends with e</td>
<td>Drop the e and add –ed (essentially just add –d)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examples: rope → <strong>roped</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If the verb...</td>
<td>Do this...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| • ends with a consonant + *y*  
Consonant: NOT *a, e, i, o, u* | • Change the *y* to *i* and add *–ed*  
Examples: carry → carried; hurry → hurried |
| • ends with a single vowel + consonant  
see also When Do I Double the Ending Consonant When Adding a Suffix? | • Double the consonant and add *–ed*  
Examples: stop → stopped; tug → tugged |
| • is a “rule breaker” (called Irregular Verbs) | • memorize the past tense form of the word  
Examples: begin → began; break → broke; bring → brought; come → came; drive → drove; eat → ate; give → gave; grow → grew; know → knew; make → made; say → said; sing → sang; take → took; tell → told; throw → threw; wear → wore |