Making Nouns Plural in Spanish

A nice activity based on The Four Friends is one, which combines classroom instructions with the animal characters. Divide children into four groups and give each group one of the animal characters. Call out a familiar classroom instruction for one of the groups e.g. *¡Las ovejas, levantaos!* (Sheep, stand up!). For this activity you will need to be aware of how to make singular nouns in French, plural. As in English there is more than one way!

All Spanish nouns have a different form for the singular and plural.

If the noun ends in –o, it is nearly always masculine. All you need to do to make such a noun plural is to add an **s** to the end. For example: *el conejo, los conejos* (the rabbit, the rabbits) *un conejo, unos conejos* (a rabbit, some rabbits). A common exception to the rule is the word *mano,* (hand) which is feminine: - *la mano, las manos, una mano, unas manos*. N.B. You never say **uno** before a noun. **Uno** is only used to mean one as a number or when you are asked how many you want.

If a noun ends in –a, it is usually feminine. All you need to do to make such a noun plural is to add an **s** to the end. For example: *la oveja, las ovejas* (the sheep, the sheep). A common exception to the rule is the word día (day) which is masculine: - *el día, los días* (the day, the days) *un día, unos días* (one day, some days). There are many words ending in a, which are masculine, for example, *planeta,* planet; *dentista,* dentist.

When a noun ends in another vowel it may be either masculine or feminine, so you just have to learn the gender. You would use the correct article as above, but you add an s to the final vowel.

Examples: *tigre*, tiger: *el tigre, los tigres, un tigre, unos tigres*
serpiente, snake: la serpiente, las serpientes, una serpiente, unas   serpientes

When a noun ends in a consonant it may be either masculine or feminine. In this case, you add es to the final consonant and put in the article to correspond to the gender
Example: *ciudad*, city: *la ciudad, las ciudades, una ciudad, unas ciudades*

Nouns which end in –ón drop the accent in the plural. So: *león* (lion) becomes *leones*, and because it is masculine, the articles will give you
el león, los leones, un león, unos leones. ratón (mouse) el ratón, los ratones, un ratón, unos ratones

If a noun ends in z, the z changes to c in the plural. This is because, in Spanish, "Before an i or an e, z changes to c" In both cases, the z or the c produce the sound "th".

Example: *lápiz* (pencil): *el lápiz, los lápices, un lápiz, unos lápices,*
pez (fish) el pez, los peces, un pez, los peces.