friends

Structurally, this word is made up of two parts: friend and s. We can represent this as:

```
  N
 /|
/ \
N friend s
```

or:

```
[ N [ N friend ] s ]
```

or:

```
friend + s
```

Each of these parts has grammatical properties. Friend is a noun and has a particular meaning. S is a marker of the grammatical feature “plural”.

While most nouns in English form their plural by adding -s, not all of them do. Note:

- ox oxen
- child children
- mouse mice
- foot feet
- man men
- goose geese
- tooth teeth
- person people
- sheep sheep
- deer deer

The study of these structural elements in word structure is called **morphology**.
The word *friends* is also pronounced a particular way:

\[ \text{[frendz]} \]

This pronunciation is based on the pronunciation of the two parts of the word. But notice that while *friend* is always pronounced [frend], the piece that is the marker of plural (s) is not always pronounced [z]. Sometimes it is pronounced [s] or [iz]. Note:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>lip</th>
<th>lip[s]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>rock</td>
<td>rock[z]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tree</td>
<td>tree[z]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>latch</td>
<td>latch[iz]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gum</td>
<td>gum[z]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>myth</td>
<td>myth[s]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>laugh</td>
<td>laugh[s]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>two</td>
<td>two[iz]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cove</td>
<td>cove[z]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>breeze</td>
<td>breeze[iz]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ridge</td>
<td>ridg[iz]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bat</td>
<td>bat[s]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>turf</td>
<td>turf[s]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cape</td>
<td>cape[s]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How do speakers of English know how to pronounce the plural?

- Do they learn the form of the plural for each noun separately?
- Do they learn that nouns that end in certain letters take [s], those that end in other letters take [z], and those that end in other letters take [iz]?
- Do they learn that nouns that end in certain sounds take [s], those that end in other sounds take [z], and those that end in other sounds take [iz]?
- Do they learn that nouns that end in a certain type of sound take [s], those that end in a certain type of sound take [z], and those that end in a different type of sound take [iz]?

The study of the regularities of pronunciation is called **phonology**.

In order to understand the structure of words, we need to consider both morphology and phonology.