

"people or persons"

Internet source

occasionally we use persons instead of people, "accommodates 6 persons"
- is there a solid grammatical rule for the difference in use?

#1. "people or persons"

In response to Reply # 0

Dear Katie,

There is no rule, but we only use 'persons' in the most formal situations in modern British English - usually legal notices. 'Persons' has become much less common over the last 50 years.

2.- Felix asks, "*I was just wondering when it was appropriate to use people as opposed to persons.*"

There is some confusion regarding the two terms, especially because their meaning and usage suffered a mutation along the centuries. Both derive from Latin, but from different words.

Person derives from *persona*, which refers to an individual. People, on the other hand, derives from *populum*, and it refers to a group of persons sharing a culture or social environment.

Person is a singular form, and its plural is persons. Over the time, however, many writers started to adopt people as the plural form of person, and nowadays it is widely accepted. Notice that legal and very formal texts still use persons as the plural form.

One distinction that was proposed was to use persons as long as there was a countable number of individuals (e.g., 67 persons left the school) and people when such a number was large and indefinite (e.g., the people left the stadium quickly). The rule did not catch on, though, and some writers still use people even when there is a definite or small number of individuals.

Finally, people can also be used in the plural form (e.g., the peoples of Asia) when it refers to the different cultural groups that live in a certain region.

Re: Some Candy vs. Lots of Candies

Quote:

Originally Posted by JLanguage

Is it correct to use candy as a plural noun?

Ex. On Halloween, I received a ton of candy.

There are many great kinds of candy.

Or should the form candies always be used for plural?

Ex. Willie Wonka made many zany types of candies.

I personally have always used the former.

Thanks,

-Jonathan.

Hola J,

I've seen 'candies' used a lot. Generally, I've found that usage in BE more than AE, and in AE, mostly in works from the 19th century and earlier.

It's perfectly ok, though not as common in AE as your preferred version.

Cuchu

Quote:

Originally Posted by **JLanguage**

On Halloween, I received a ton of candy.

There are many great kinds of candy.

Both of these sentences sound fine to me.

I think I mostly avoid the plural "candies". I would say **two pieces of candy** instead of **two candies**. Similarly we say "box of candy", and not "box of candies".

As for Willie Wonka, his factory is named "Willie Wonka Candy Factory"---not candies factory. 😊

"would want to take a word like candy and use the following.

candy(singular), candies(plural), candie's(singular possessive), and candies'(plural possessive). "

You've got them all right except the singular possessive. The singular possessive of "candy" is "candy's."

Candy

Candy's

Candies

Candies'