

## HOMOPHONEMES

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How many different spellings can one phoneme or sound have? **Sēz** has at least 28. All are in W3 except the possessive forms, Holy See (OED), the plural of Se(lenium), sēz, Spanish *si*, and -sies.

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| cees = ces = cs    | plurals of the letter c: W3 ( <i>Webster's 3rd New Int'l. Dict.</i> )           |
| cee's = ce's = c's | possessives of the letter c   |
| -cies, cy's        | plural and possessive of -cy, a suffix of action, practice, rank, etc           |
| Cs, C's            | ditto of Century, Roman 100, etc  |
| seas, sea's        | ditto of sea  |
| sees, see's        | ditto of the word see, or contraction of 'see is' as in "See's a trigram."      |
| Sees, See's        | ditto of a term for the Papacy, the Holy See, or of other named sees.           |
| seize              |   |
| Ses Se's           | ditto of the chemical abbreviation for Selenium                                 |
| -ses               | plural of -sis, a suffix but a headword in W3 as with other -fixes in this list |
| sēz                | phonetic spelling of sees, seize, etc.  |
| sis, si's          | English plural and possessive of Spanish yes, a frequent English borrowing      |
| -syes, -sy's       | plural and possessive of -sy, an affectionate suffix for small one, eg mopsy    |
| -sies              | informal plural of -sy; mopsies   |
| Szis, Szi's        | members of or possessive of a Himalayan people                                  |

In addition, 27 phonemes sometimes pronounced like sēz in different accents or in slurred talk give a shonky total of 55 spellings. I've excluded 9 other (not so) near homophones involving a long i.

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| cease              |  |
| cedes, cede's      | plural and possessive of the word cede; or contraction of "cede is"  |
| cis, cis-          | on the same side of a molecule, both a word and a prefix             |
| cist               | a rock-lined pit or grave, or a wicker sacrament vessel              |
| cyst, -cyst        | word and suffix  |
| says, sez          | verb and a frequent colloquial spelling thereof                      |
| sces = sess = sezz | sinsemilla cannabis ( <i>Cassell Dict. of Slang</i> )                |
| seeds, seed's      |  |
| Sias = Zias        | members of a Pueblo people and language group                        |
| Sia's = Zia's      | possessive of same   |
| SIDS               | sudden infant death syndrome, abbreviation used as a word, like AIDS |
| siege              |  |
| Sis, Si's          | plural and possessive of the chemical abbreviation for silicon       |
| zees, zs           | plurals of the letter Z (US pronunciation)                           |
| zee's, z's         | possessive of same   |

Are there any other spellings of sēz? Can you find a phoneme or word with even more spellings?