Plurality of nouns is indicated in a variety of ways in Kiribati. Many nouns have a separate plural form, in which the vowel (usually the first) is lengthened. However, many more do not, and there is no dependable way of predicting which nouns will have a separate plural form. (In the glossary, nouns which have a lengthened plural form are marked with a star.)

In no case is the lengthened vowel the sole indicator of plurality though, and so there should be little difficulty in recognizing or producing plural constructions.

1. **absence of te**

As the presence of the singular article *te* is generally obligatory (except, for example, when the noun is possessed) its absence is almost always a sure sign of the plural. (see Lesson 14):

\[
\text{lai te neera iao on te taibora.} \\
\text{there is a nail on the table.}
\]

\[
\text{lai _ neera iao on te taibora.} \\
\text{there are nails on the table.}
\]

2. **presence of taian(i)**

Similarly, the presence of the plural article *taian(i)* is a clear indicator of a noun's plurality:

\[
\text{lai taian auti inanon te kaawa.} \\
\text{there are houses in the village.}
\]

Note that when taian is used with a noun which has a separate lengthened plural form, the unlengthened form appears:

\[
\text{lai booki iao on te taibora.} \\
\text{there are books on the table.}
\]

\[
\text{lai taiani boki iao on te taibora.} \\
\text{there are books on the table.}
\]
3. **relative pronouns**

Relative pronouns distinguish between singular and plural

\[
\text{la}i \text{ booki a}i\text{k}a \text{ a uraura ia}o\text{n te taibora.}
\]
\[
\text{there are books which (pl.) red on the table.}
\]
\[
\text{There are (some) red books on the table.}
\]

Notice also that in this example, the vowel is lengthened in booki, and there is the absence of te.

4. **demonstrative pronouns**

Like the relative pronouns, demonstratives mark number. (see Lesson __ on demonstratives):

\[
\text{Bon}i \quad \text{uee akekei.}
\]
\[
\text{it's — flowers those}
\]
\[
\text{It's those flowers.}
\]

And there is the absence of te as well.

5. **numbers**

Numbers, (even when there is the presence of te) are clear and obvious indicators of plurality:

\[
\text{la}i \text{ uman te aomata ia}o\text{n te bike.}
\]
\[
\text{There are two people on the beach.}
\]

\[
\text{Bon teniua aia auti.}
\]
\[
\text{truly three their houses}
\]
\[
\text{They have three houses.}
\]
6. other quantity words

The presence of words such as *tabeua*, 'some', or *bati*, 'many' also serve to mark plurals:

lai tabeman aiine ikai.
There are some women here.

E bati te maninnara.
There are many mosquitos.

7. subject pronouns

When the noun is the subject of the sentences, the subject pronoun indicates both person and number:

A mena iaon te taibora neera.
they be located on the table nails

The nails are on the table.

8. objects

Similarly, when the noun is in the object position in a sentence, the ending of the verb changes to indicate plurality. (see Lesson _ on object pronouns):

I noora te boki.
I see the book.

I noori booki.
I see the books.

I nooriia aomata.
I see the people.

9. taan

The plural form of *tia*, the agent prefix (-er), is *taan*, another plural indicator:

lai taan reirei ikekei.
There are some teachers there.
A. Underline the plural indicators in the following sentences:

1. A bua taiani boki.  
   lost books
2. A booti been.  
   gather
3. A buti taian nang i karawa.  
   move clouds sky
4. A bootaki aine n te auti.  
   gathered women house
5. A nakonako taake n te kawai.  
   walk ducks road
6. A kaukaki taiani baoki.  
   opened boxes
7. A kawakawa iino.  
   crawl maggots
8. I taetae ma taian aomata.  
   speak people
   raised sails
10. A uruaki taiani kaa.  
    broken cars
11. E maeka ma maan.  
    lives animals
12. A riki iia i atuna.  
    grow grey hairs his head
    break doors
    run buses now
15. A korakora taian nao.  
    strong waves
    sharp knives these
17. A ure taian uee.  
    open flowers
18. A bua reeta mai ikai.  
    lost letters from here
19. A tang tiina.  
    cry mothers
    weave mats
B. Underline the plural indicators in the following sentences:

1. A bootaki taian aiine n te auti.
   gathered women house
2. A kakarau boong aikai.
   rainy days these
3. Iai taama iaoni Kiribati.
   fathers
4. Iai taan reirei ikai.
   teachers here
5. Ti nooriiia aomata ikekei.
   see people there
6. A nako aiine akekei.
   go women here
7. E bati te nango ikai.
   many flies here
8. E uoti b'aaia man te titooa.
   bring things from the store
9. Iai aiine tabeman aika a nako.
   some who go
10. I nooriiia uoman aomata.
    see two people
11. Iai auti aika a buubura i Tarawa.
    houses which big
12. I nooriiia aiine ake a nako.
    see women go
    fathers those men
    some canoes sea
15. A beibeti waa i taari.
    float
    sing singers
17. I kiniki uee.
    pick flowers
18. E kanakoiiia aomata.
    send away people
19. A matuu tabeman aomata ikai.
    sleep people here
20. Anganai tennai te kariki.
    give me three bread
C. Give the plural forms of the following nouns. Use taian(i) or length:

1. te auti  
   house

2. te ika  
   fish

3. te bike  
   beach

4. te le  
   sail

5. te kaa  
   car

6. te ria  
   lip

7. te boki  
   book

8. te b'ai  
   thing

9. te bong  
   day

10. te aro  
    religion

11. te rau  
    thatch

12. te kawai  
    road

13. te roobu  
    rope

14. te rama  
    outrigger float

15. te ruura  
    ruler

16. te booti  
    boat

17. te ben  
    coconut

18. te tobu  
    soap

19. te uaa  
    fruit

20. te moa  
    chicken
D. Rewrite the following sentences in the plural:

1. l.ai te ika ikai.
2. l.noora te aomata ikekei.
3. E a nako te aiine.
4. l.ai te boki ikai.
5. l.ai te tia reirei ikekei.
6. l.noora te boki.
7. l.korea te reta.
8. l.ai te aiine ikai.
9. l.ai temanna te aiine iaon te bike.
10. Bon te uee aarei.
11. Ti anena te anene.
12. l.ai te auti inanon te kaawa.
14. E mena iaon te taibora te am'arake.
15. E matuu te tia mm'akuri.
16. l.kaina te mataroa.
17. Bon te uaa aei.