

APOSTROPHES

1. An apostrophe denotes *ownership* or *possession*:

singular nouns

(one person, place or thing)

(For singular and plural nouns, add an apostrophe and –s)

child's toy

man's hat

goose's feathers

plural nouns

(two or more persons, places or things)

children's game

men's club

geese's feathers

(plural nouns ending in –s, add apostrophe)

lady's clothing

fox's den

bus's wheels

teacher's meeting

boy's bat

girl's basketball

doctor's office

ladies' clothing

foxes' den

buses' wheels

teachers' meeting

boys' bat

girls' basketball

doctors' building

singular proper nouns ending in –s

(add an apostrophe and –s)

Mr. Russ's car

Kay Jones's house

plural proper nouns ending in –s

(add –es and an apostrophe)

the Russes' car

the Joneses' house

Singular and plural nouns ending in –s with the sound –eez

(add an apostrophe to the end)

Aristophanes' comedies

Socrates' lecture

the Murphys' cat

compound words and phrases

(for singular nouns & indefinite pronouns, add apostrophe and an –s at the end of the word or phrase)

father-in-law's house

another's homework

somebody else's chair

president-elect's tenure

no one's cot

secretary of state's office

(for plural compound words ending in –s, add apostrophe)

In-laws' house

several mothers' children

2. An apostrophe indicates missing letter(s) in a *contraction*:

it is/it's	do not/don't	he is/he's	would not/wouldn't
they are/they're	we are/we're	I have/I've	I am/I'm

POSSESSIVE PERSONAL PRONOUNS *NEVER* USE APOSTROPHES

my	its	his	your	their	our	her
			yours	theirs	ours	hers

The dog buried its bone. Theirs was broken first. Yours is the green one.

3. An apostrophe shows *omissions* of letters or numbers:

this and that	1942	come on over and talk
this 'n' that	'42	c'mon over and talk

4. An apostrophe and –s form the *plural* of numbers, letters and symbols. These plurals may also be correctly written without apostrophes, but whichever you choose, be consistent.

numbers:	He had three 5's in his wallet. I received 8s in the competition.
letters:	I taught my son his ABC's. Tanya earned four Bs this semester.
symbols:	How many #'s are printed in the phone book? Please use !s at the end of exclamatory sentences.
years:	The 1960's were are great time to be young. People who grew up in the 1940s were influenced by World War II. (singular years use an apostrophe) We were living here during 1973's flood.