



## Apostrophes

### What is an Apostrophe?

An apostrophe is a punctuation mark (') that appears as part of a word to show possession, to make a plural number or to indicate the omission of one or more letters.

### Three Uses of Apostrophes:

In most cases an apostrophe is used to show possession. In such cases, one noun will always be followed by another noun, i.e., the one it possesses.

*Ex:* Gloria's hat...

*Ex:* Chase's red car...

#### 1. To Show Possession: Singular and Plural Nouns

- To make a singular noun that does not end in "s" possessive, add an apostrophe and an "s"

*Ex:* The cat's master loves his cat.

- To make a plural noun that does not end in "s" possessive, add an apostrophe and an "s"

*Ex:* The men's restroom is closed for repairs.

#### Nouns Ending in "S"

- To make a singular noun ending in "s" possessive, add an apostrophe and an "s"

*Ex:* John Keats's death inspired Shelley's famous elegy, "Adonais."

- If a singular noun ends with an "s" and contains an additional "s" sound elsewhere in the noun, add only the apostrophe to make the noun possessive.

*Ex:* Jesus' birth in a stable symbolizes the close relationship between man and nature.

- To make a plural noun ending in "s" possessive, add only an apostrophe

Ex: The cats' master loves his cats.

### Compound Words or Group Words

- To make compound words or a group of words possessive, add an apostrophe and an "s" to only the last word.
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- *Ex: Singular:* The chairman of the board's decision was final.
- *Ex: Plural:* The daughters-in-law's children argue about everything.

### Separate and Joint Possession

- To make two nouns show separate possession, add an apostrophe and an "s" after each possessive noun.

Ex: Kari's and Lynn's bikes are in excellent condition.  
(They each have a bike.)

- To make two nouns show joint possession, add an apostrophe only to the second unit.

Ex: Cameron and Mitch's car broke down last week.  
(They share a car.)

## 2. To Make Plural: Time and Money

- To make units of time and money plural, apply possession rules for singular and plural nouns.

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*Ex of Singular:* A day's wage, an hour's wait, the dollar's value

*Ex of Plural:* Two days' wages, two hours' wait, two dollars' value

### Word Plurals

- To make words used as a plural, add an apostrophe and an "s"
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- *Ex:* Mindy completed the work with no **if's**, **and's**, or **but's**.
- (Do not use apostrophes to make numbers or acronyms plural.)
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*Incorrect:* 1990's                      *Correct:* 1990s

*Incorrect:* four VIP's                *Correct:* four VIPs

## 3. To Indicate Omission: Contractions

- To form contractions, use an apostrophe in place of the omitted letters.

Ex: He can't find his wallet.  
(The apostrophe takes the place of the omitted letters "n" and "o").

Ex: She isn't here.  
(The apostrophe takes the place of the omitted letter "o").

**Remember:** There are three main uses for the apostrophe: to show possession, to make a plural number or to indicate omitted letters.