

RULES FOR THE APOSTROPHE

1. Use an apostrophe in a contraction where the omitted letters would go.

Example: should not = shouldn't; it is = it's; could have = could've

2. Add 's to a noun or indefinite pronoun that does not end in S to show possession.

Example: The children's lunches were left in their classroom. ("Children," even though it is plural, does not end in an "s"; therefore, 's is added to make it possessive.)

Example: We will listen to everyone's ideas in time. (ideas of everyone)

Example: The children spent the night at their aunt's house. (house of their aunt)

3. Add only an ' to a noun or indefinite pronoun that already ends in S to show possession.

Example: Both of their aunts' houses were fun places to stay. (houses of their aunts)

Example: The Jones' new van was very fancy. (new van of the Jones)

[Note: the personal pronouns - *his, hers, its, theirs, yours, ours* - NEVER use an apostrophe to show possession: *The truck had a dent in its fender. That book is his.*]

4. Use an apostrophe to show the plural of numbers and letters.

Example: You use too many and's in your writing.

Example: He bought seven CD's at the store.

5. Use an apostrophe to represent omitted numbers in a year.

Example: He graduated from high school in '85.

WATCH OUT!

▶ **Do NOT use an apostrophe with a noun that ends in S if it does not show possession.**

Incorrect: The Garcias' bought a new car.

*Correct: The Garcias bought a new car. (The word *Garcias* does not show possession and, therefore, should not have an apostrophe.)*

▶ **Do NOT confuse *its* and *it's***

Example of its: The jury reached its decision in under two hours. [possession, belonging to it.]

Example of it's: It's going to be late when we get home. [contraction for it is]

PRACTICE

Rewrite the following phrases as possessive phrases with apostrophes.

1. the toys of the children = _____
2. the buttons of the blouse = _____
3. the buttons of the blouses = _____
4. the kisses of the mother = _____
5. the walking stick of Mr. James = _____
6. the laces of the sneakers = _____
7. the salute of the men = _____
8. the greetings of the farmers = _____
9. the house of my grandmother = _____
10. the damage from the flood = _____
11. the grades of the students = _____
12. the grades of the student = _____

Insert apostrophes where necessary. Put a C next to any correct sentences.

1. I told my friend that its too late to add a class.
2. Both my neighbors houses were robbed last week.
3. They graduated from high school in 91 and were married in 92.
4. My new car already has a scratch in its door.
5. Your essays conclusion was very good.
6. Its not easy to work and go to school at the same time.
7. Floridas neighbors are Georgia and Alabama.
8. Ill water your plants while youre on vacation.
9. Please show me your pictures of your trip to Ireland in 87.
10. Hes gotten all As in his English class so far.