**Explanation & Examples**

The apostrophe is used to indicate possession or the omission of one or more letters. It can also be used with plural lowercase letters and single-digit numbers expressed numerically.

***Possession***

The apostrophe is used with nouns to indicate ownership.

* **Add an apostrophe –s to singular nouns.**

Example: The musician’s guitar; Lois’s car

* **Add only an apostrophe to plural nouns that end in –s.**

Example: The students’ test scores; the families’ ancestries

* **Add an apostrophe –s if the plural noun does not end in –s.**

Example: The children’s pageant; the women’s conference

* **To show joint possession, add the apostrophe only to the final noun; however, to indicate individual possession, add an apostrophe to all nouns.**

Example: Maria and Joseph’s new car is blue. Maria’s and Joseph’s expectations were quite different.

* **Add the apostrophe to the last element in a compound word.**

Example: Her sister-in-law’s surgery was successful.

* **Add an apostrophe –s to make indefinite pronouns possessive.**

Example: Everyone’s medical insurance plan was reviewed.

***Contraction***

* **An apostrophe is used to replace the letters omitted within a contraction.**

Example: It’s a shame Johnny can’t make it to the concert.

Note: *It’s* stands for *it is*; *can’t* stands for *cannot*.

* **An apostrophe is also used to mark the omission of the first two digits of a year.**

Example: The dean presented the class of ’99.

***Conventional Uses***

* **The apostrophe is used to form the plural of lowercase letters and single-digit numbers expressed as a numeral.**

Example: You get 5 points for rolling double 6’s. Mind your *p*’s and *q*’s.

**Practice**

Insert an apostrophe and/or an –s wherever one is needed in the following sentences.

1. Four attorneys expertise provided a solid defense for the defendant.
2. There are four *s* and two *p* in the word *Mississippi*.
3. Their two son-in-law dealership was in financial difficulty.
4. The auditors are checking the secretary report.
5. Both Jason and Jeremy father coached the softball team.
6. Smith and Johnson product is selling at a high profit.
7. The senator-elect office was staffed primarily by volunteers.
8. The children noses were pressed against the candy store window.
9. Both diplomats briefcases were stolen.
10. The diet is meant to improve everyone health.
11. Mrs. Jones sister spent last year in Italy.
12. Most of the lawyer offices are located on the tenth floor of the building.

**Answers**: (1) attorneys’ (2) *s*’s; *p*’s (3) sons-in-law’s (4) secretary’s (5) Jason’s and Jeremy’s (6) Smith and Johnson’s (7) senator-elect’s (8) children’s (9) diplomats’ (10) everyone’s (11) Jones’s (12) lawyers’