

# Apostrophes

# *An Explanation*

---

The **apostrophe** is used to indicate:

- possession
- contractions
- the omission of one or more letters
- plural numbers

# Possession

- Add –'s if the noun does not end in –s, or if the noun is singular and ends in –s
  - Ex: *The musician's guitar was lost; Louis's car was stolen.*
- Add –' if the plural form of a noun ends in –s
  - Ex. *The students' activities had to be rescheduled*

# Possession

- Add –'s (or –s') only to the last noun to show joint possession; however if you need to indicate individual possession add –'s to all nouns.
  - Ex. *Maria and Joseph's new car is blue; Maria's and Joseph's expectations were quite different.*
- Add –'s (or –s') to the last element in a compound word.
  - Ex. *Her sister-in-law's surgery was successful.*

# Possession

---

- Add –'s to indefinite pronouns that are possessive.
  - *Ex. Everyone's medical insurance plan was reviewed.*

# Contractions

The **apostrophe** is used to *replace* missing letters in a contraction.

Example:

- *It's a shame that Jonny can't make it to the concert tonight.*

**It's** stands for **it is**.

**Can't** stands for **can not**.

# *Conventional Uses*

---

The **apostrophe** is used to pluralize numbers, letters, and abbreviations.

- 8's
- J's
- IOU's

Do NOT use an apostrophe in plural nouns, singular verbs, or possessive personal pronouns:

- a. The plural of “Jones” is “Jones”
- b. The singular verb “breaks” remains “breaks”
- c. His, hers, its, ours, yours, theirs, and whose are all possessive forms of *he*, *she*, *it*, *we*, *you*, *they*, and *who*. (They never take apostrophes.)



## *Misuses cont'd*

---

Do NOT use an apostrophe to form the possessives of personal pronouns.

- a. Incorrect: it's toes, your's
- b. Correct: its toes, yours

Do NOT use an apostrophe to form plurals of nouns

- a. Incorrect: book's are, the Freed's
- b. Correct: books are, the Freeds