

Apostrophe

The apostrophe (') is a punctuation sign used for two major purposes: possession and contraction. The apostrophe can also be used to indicate the plural of letters of the alphabet and for special grammatical situations.

1. POSSESSION

The apostrophe is used to indicate the possession or ownership of something. The owner word may be a singular or a plural noun. Add -'s after the owner word. If the owner word already ends with the letter -s, simply add an apostrophe after the -s.

The car of Jim	Jim's car
the stable of the horse	the horse's stable
the stable of the horses	the horses' stable
the manual of the owner	the owner's manual
books of the children	children's books

NB: to form the possessive of any singular proper noun, add -'s

the aunt of Charles	Charles's aunt
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to form the possessive of a plural proper noun, add an apostrophe only

the dog of the Joneses	the Joneses' dog
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Joint Possession: for possessives in a series, add -'s if the possession is shared:

Doug, Karina and Max's house

If the ownership is separate, place -'s after each noun:

Doug's, Karina's and Max's laptops (they each have their own laptop)

Notice that some possessive forms are not always as obvious as the examples above. Some nouns are "owned" by days of the week, for example:

the chores of Saturday	Saturday's chores
the salary of a month	a month's salary
the holiday of a week	a week's holiday
the holiday of six weeks	six weeks' holiday

NB: Apostrophes are never used in possessive pronouns: yours, theirs, whose, ours, his,

hers, its.

The possessive form of ITS *never* takes an apostrophe. Note: "it's *always* means "it is."
The dog sat in its basket. It's a sunny day.

2. PLURALS

The apostrophe is used to indicate the plurals of letters:

He dropped his "g's" and lisped his "s's."

It is also used in special cases to avoid confusion:

Her letter of agreement contained many "if's," "but's" and "maybe's."

NB: The apostrophe is not used to form the plural of abbreviations or numbers:

1990s CDs

3. CONTRACTION

The apostrophe is used to indicate the missing letter or letters when one or more words are contracted into a shorter form. The apostrophe goes where the missing letter or letters would have gone.

<i>Full form</i>	<i>Contraction</i>
you are	you're
it is	it's
could not	couldn't
have not	haven't