Possessive Apostrophes

A possessive apostrophe shows that a noun has ownership (or possession) of a person, object, idea, or quality.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If the word is a(n):</th>
<th>Add:</th>
<th>Example:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Singular noun</td>
<td>’s</td>
<td>California’s, John’s, baby’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singular noun ending in -s</td>
<td>’s or ’</td>
<td>Usage varies; ‘s is preferred, but using ’ is acceptable for multi-syllable words. Zeus’s, Gus’s, boss’s or Carlos’, Arkansas’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plural noun ending in -s</td>
<td>’</td>
<td>mothers’, babies’, bosses’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plural noun not ending in -s</td>
<td>’s</td>
<td>children’s, mice’s, geese’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indefinite pronoun</td>
<td>’s</td>
<td>somebody’s, nobody’s, everyone’s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rules to Remember:

- *It’s* is a contraction meaning “it is”. *It’s* too bad that she got sick during her vacation.
- *Its* is possessive. The cat played with *its* toy.
- Inanimate objects cannot be possessive.
  - *The computer’s* screen becomes *The computer screen*
  - *The house’s* color becomes *The house color* or *The color of the house*
- Add -’s to the last name in the case of joint possession.
  - Peter and Jamie’s dog got out of the yard.
- Add -’s to each name if there is no joint possession.
  - Eric’s and Kevin’s grades are high this semester.
- Add -’s to the end of a compound word.
  - My sister-in-law’s car broke down.

Exercise: Correct the statements below by adding apostrophes.

1. Sarahs new car is a hybrid.
2. Pete has two dogs. The dogs toys are in the backyard.
3. The ducks flying pattern was beautiful.
4. Nate and Jackie’s wedding is on Saturday.
5. The childrens books are in the classroom.
6. That babies name is Claire.
7. My sisters-in-law house is right on the beach.
8. The wolf snarled and showed its teeth.
9. Janes and Peters lunches were delicious.

Key: 1) Sarah’s  2) dogs’  3) duck’s  4) Nate and Jackie’s  5) children’s  6) baby’s  7) sister-in-law’s  8) its  9) Jane’s and Peter’s

Works Consulted:
http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/621/01/.