

Possessive Apostrophes

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

If the word is a(n):	Add:	Example:
Singular noun	's	girl's, John's, baby's
Singular noun ending in -s	's or ' Usage varies; 's is preferred, but using ' is acceptable for multi-syllable words.	Zeus's, Gus's, boss's or Carlos', Arkansas'
Plural noun ending in -s	'	mothers', babies', bosses'
Plural noun not ending in -s	's	children's, mice's, geese's
Indefinite pronoun	's	somebody's, nobody's, everyone's

Rules to Remember

- *It's* is a contraction meaning “it is.” *Its* is possessive.
 - **It's** too bad that she got sick during her vacation. (contraction)
 - The cat played with **its** toy. (possessive)
- Inanimate objects cannot be possessive.
 - Instead of saying, “the computer's screen,” you can say, “the computer screen.”
 - Instead of saying, “the house's color,” you can say, “the color of the house.”
- Add 's to the last name in the case of joint possession.
 - Peter and **Jaime's** dog got out of the yard.
 - Jim and **Peggy's** car was totaled.
- Add 's to each name if there is no joint possession.
 - Eric's and Kevin's grades are high this semester.
 - The girl's dress and the boy's pants matched.
- Add 's to the end of a compound word.
 - My **sister-in-law's** car broke down.
 - Her **mother-in-law's** temper was terrible.

Activity

Correct the statements below by adding apostrophes (if they are needed).

1. **Sarabs** 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 Jackies** wedding is on Saturday.
5. The **childrens** books are in the classroom.
6. That **babys** 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.

Answer Key for Activity

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. no apostrophe needed
9. Jane's and Peter's

References

Brizee, Allen. "The Apostrophe." *The OWL at Purdue*, 22 Feb. 2013. Web. 28 July 2014.