

Apostrophes & Possessives

1. Apostrophes are used to indicate the possessive form of a noun. One trick to determining whether you want a possessive is to change the phrase to "...of the..."

ex. the man's wallet → the wallet of the man

ex. our teacher's favorite student → the favorite student of the teacher.

a. Add 's to the singular form of a word (even if it ends in -s):

the subject's response

Carlos's left arm

b. Add 's to plural forms of words that do not end in -s:

the children's test scores [not "the childrens' test scores"]

the People's Choice Awards [not "the Peoples' Choice Awards"]

c. Add ' to the end of plural nouns that end in -s:

the participants' responses

my parents' marital bliss

d. To show joint possession, follow rules a-c for only the LAST person in a group:

Marko and Melanie's best routine [not "Marko's and Melanie's best routine"]

Dr. Clark and Dr. Andres' therapy session [not "Dr. Clark's and Dr. Andres' session."]

2. Apostrophes can also be used to indicate missing letters in a contraction.

ex. Cameron could not stand to see Lily cry. → Cameron couldn't stand to see Lily cry.

ex. They are rarely late. → They're rarely late.

a. It's = It is. Its = belonging to it

You should take an umbrella because it's raining.

The dog wagged its tail because it was happy to see its master.

b. Let's = Let us. Lets = Allows.

Let's use correct grammar—it's fashionable and fun!

Sometime Monica lets Chandler eat in bed.

c. You're = You are. Your = belonging to you

You're going to have great grammar if you study this worksheet.

Your writing skills will be better if you follow the rules above.