

APOSTROPHES

Apostrophes have two main uses.

1. OMISSION

To show that a letter has been missed out in order to shorten a word:

Will not	-	Won't
Do not	-	Don't
It is	-	It's
They are	-	They're

Please note, the possessive *its* NEVER has an apostrophe, for example: The dog wagged *its* tail.

Sometimes, more than one letter is taken out:

Cannot	-	Can't
Shall	-	Shan't
Could have	-	Could've

Please note, NEVER EVER, could of. This is grammatically incorrect.

2. POSSESSION

To show that something belongs to, or is somehow connected with, something else:

When the word is singular, add 's

The dog has a tail.

The Headteacher has an office.

David has a football.

The dog's tail

The Headteacher's office

David's football

When the word is plural, add ' without an *s*.

The horses have a stable.
The players have a meeting.
The judges make a decision.

The horses' stable
The players' meeting
The judges' decision

Exceptions

1. If a word is plural, but does not end in *s*, add 's.

The children have toys.
The women are kind.

The children's toys
The women's kindness

2. Singular words which end with an *iz* sound and have more than one vowel sound (syllable) usually take ' only:

So: Moses Moses' family **BUT** Liz Liz's book
 Jeff Bridges Jeff Bridges' new film

3. The following possessive pronouns do not have apostrophes:

his hers ours yours theirs

THE BIGGEST MISTAKE MADE BY STUDENTS IS TO USE APOSTROPHES IN PLURAL WORDS JUST BECAUSE THE WORD ENDS IN THE LETTER *s*.

THE SECOND MOST COMMON ERROR IS TO PUT APOSTROPHES AFTER FIGURES AND ABBREVIATIONS :

1890s, 1960s NOT 1890's, 1960's

MPs, MBEs, HOFs, HOYs NOT MP's, MBE's, HOF's, HOY's