

Lesson 89**The Apostrophe**

Use an apostrophe and -s for the possessive of a singular indefinite pronoun.

one's coat *but* his sleeping bag

Use an apostrophe and -s to form the possessive of a singular noun, even one that ends in -s.

The dress's fabric Charles Addams's cartoons the dog's collar

Use an apostrophe alone to form the possessive of a plural noun that ends in -s.

the girls' meeting the hats' sizes the bats' habits

Use an apostrophe and -s to form the possessive of a plural noun that does not end in -s.

the women's department the sheep's pasture the children's hour

Put only the last word of a compound noun in the possessive form.

her father-in-law's car the attorney general's office

If two or more persons possess something jointly, use the possessive form for the last person named. If two or more persons (or companies) possess an item individually, put each one's name in the possessive form.

Uncle Dan and Aunt Susan's house Procter and Gamble's soaps
Bach's and Handel's music Tom Cruise's and Julia Roberts's films

Use an apostrophe in place of letters omitted in contractions (words formed from two words that have been combined by omitting one or more letters).

I + am = I'm could + not = couldn't Linda + is = Linda's

Use an apostrophe in place of the omitted numerals of a particular year.

the Super Bowl of '94 the rebellion of '98 the winter of '77

Use an apostrophe and -s to form the plural of letters, numerals, symbols, and words used to represent themselves.

9's 7's @'s &'s

► **Exercise 1** Add apostrophes where needed. Cross out apostrophes used incorrectly using the delete (✂) symbol. If the sentence is correct, write *C* in the blank.

_____ Aunt Elizabeth's dog had to have it's broken leg set by a veterinarian.

_____ 1. Perhaps you've marveled at the incredible gymnastic ability of various primate's.

_____ 2. Their abilities' are on display in zoos, animal parks, and, for a few lucky people, in the animals natural habitats.

- _____ 3. Primate's include lemurs, monkeys, and apes.
- _____ 4. Consider, for example, the graceful gibbons, which live in southeast Asia.
- _____ 5. With it's long, muscular arms and legs, a gibbon has no trouble spending two hours a day swinging through the tree's.
- _____ 6. Using a method of movement known to zoologist's as brachiation, the gibbon swings first with one arm and then the other.
- _____ 7. A gibbons ability to stand upright is second only to that of humans.
- _____ 8. These beautiful creature's have a distinctive ring of white fur around their faces.
- _____ 9. Some lemur's, a group of about 23 species that live on the African island of Madagascar, hop quickly along the ground with their' arms' waving.
- _____ 10. Their peculiar movement makes them look like little ballet dancer's.
- _____ 11. Most lemurs are very skilled at leaping great distances from tree to tree.
- _____ 12. The sportive lemur jumps from tree trunk to tree trunk with it's body vertical.
- _____ 13. Perhaps the most gymnastic primates, however, are the South American monkeys, whose athletic feats are legendary.
- _____ 14. Large monkeys such as the spider monkeys and woolly monkeys possess one great advantage over other primate specie's.
- _____ 15. These monkeys tails are prehensile, which means they are able to grasp limbs and branches.

► **Exercise 2** Write in the blank the form of the word or phrase indicated.

Sharon (possessive) Sharon's

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. anyone (possessive) _____ | 9. will not (contraction) _____ |
| 2. you are (contraction) _____ | 10. snakes (possessive) _____ |
| 3. son-in-law (possessive) _____ | 11. secretary of defense (possessive) _____ |
| 4. 8 (plural) _____ | 12. Barnum and Bailey (possessive) _____ |
| 5. oxen (possessive) _____ | 13. I am (contraction) _____ |
| 6. she is (contraction) _____ | 14. it (possessive) _____ |
| 7. does not (contraction) _____ | 15. gorillas (possessive) _____ |
| 8. Twentieth Century-Fox (possessive) _____ | |