

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) _____ | |

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■ A. Using Apostrophes

Add apostrophes to the following sentences where they are needed. If a sentence contains no errors, write *correct*.

1. Manuel received two weeks pay for his temporary work at Discount World.
2. Manuel wouldnt tell me about his employers benefits.
3. Someones been giving false reports about his or her annual income.
4. The mens restroom and the womens restroom were recently switched.
5. The Joneses house was recently destroyed by fire.
6. Several students essays were disqualified.
7. Toms and Eddies essays were difficult for the teacher to evaluate.
8. Mary and Daves house was located in a fashionable neighborhood.
9. Her brother-in-laws interference was objectionable to Angela.
10. The shows ability to attract viewers was appreciated by its producers.
11. Sams lack of math abilities shouldnt prevent him from getting a job in the companys warehouse.
12. The editor in chiefs job is to find authors whose books will appeal to consumers interests.
13. Anyones tax return may be audited by the governments Internal Revenue Service.
14. All citizens rights are secure only when each individuals rights are secure.
15. The Smiths purchase three dollars worth of lottery tickets every week.

■ B. Writing Sentences with Apostrophes

Use an apostrophe in each of the sentences that you write according to the following guidelines.

1. (Use a plural noun ending in -s.) _____

2. (Use a compound noun.) _____

3. (Use an expression of time or money.) _____

4. (Use a noun that does not end in -s.) _____

5. (Use a singular noun ending in -s.) _____

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Key Information

Use an apostrophe and -s to form possessives in the following types of situations involving nouns and pronouns.

Singular indefinite pronouns: *someone's plate*

Singular nouns, even ones that end in -s: *the duchess's wedding*

Plural nouns that do not end in -s: *the children's sandbox*

Compound nouns: *my brother-in-law's dog*

Joint ownership: *Ricky and Maria's cat*

Individual ownership, two or more people: *van Gogh's and Monet's paintings*.

Use an apostrophe alone to form the possessive of plural nouns ending in -s.

the teams' mascot

two hours' delay

Use an apostrophe in place of letters omitted in contractions.

I am—I'm

they are—they're

cannot—can't

A. Using Apostrophes to Show Possession

Insert apostrophes where they are needed in the following phrases.

1. a trips length
2. his mothers ambitions
3. Chriss response
4. many residents signatures
5. no ones fault
6. a pair of mens pants
7. Wagners "Wedding March"
8. the two brothers jobs
9. Mr. Carsons job
10. a womans autobiography
11. everybodys problem
12. the mices cunning
13. the princes sister
14. the Dodges new home
15. someones gloves
16. one books conclusion
17. several stores sales
18. Tammy Johnsons contribution
19. the girls locker room
20. an umpires decision

B. Using Apostrophes in Contractions

The following song titles each contain two words that should be combined and written as contractions. Write the contraction in the space provided.

1. "I Have Got You Under My Skin" _____
2. "A Hard Rain Is Gonna Fall" _____
3. "For What It Is Worth" _____
4. "She Is Funny That Way" _____
5. "There Is a Small Hotel" _____

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Key Information

Use an apostrophe and -s to form the possessive of a singular noun. An -s (without the apostrophe) is also added to nouns to indicate that they are plural, as in *two kangaroos*. What do you do if you know a noun ends in -s, but you are not sure whether possession is involved?

This exercise provides a way to distinguish between a singular possessive noun and a plural

noun. If possession is involved, you should be able to ask a *whose* question that is answered by the possessive noun.

This is Al's hat.

Whose hat? Al's.

Since Al's is possessive, the apostrophe is required.

Directions A word is underlined in each of the following sentences. If the word is possessive, show that the apostrophe is needed by writing a *whose* question. Then write the answer to the question, adding an apostrophe before the -s. If the underlined word does not require an apostrophe, write *correct*.

Where is Karens house? *Whose house?* *Karen's*
Six of the players are hurt. *correct*

1. We took some pictures of Rome during our vacation. _____

2. Nancys friend is eating with us tonight. _____

3. Earls mother is a pilot in the air force. _____

4. Suddenly the computers lights went out. _____

5. The mayors speech lasted an hour. _____

6. Several books in the library describe the Old West. _____

7. Elsas new baby weighs eight pounds. _____

8. This trains conductor happens to be my neighbor. _____

9. Several students have to rush to catch the bus home. _____

10. The bears cubs were frightened by the thunder. _____
