



## Apostrophes

*Handout courtesy of Angela Gulick*

An apostrophe is a punctuation mark that has three main uses:

- An apostrophe replaces a letter in a contraction (it's = it is, don't = do not, we've = we have)
- An apostrophe is used in a name or an hour (O'Connor, O'Callahan, seven o'clock)
- An apostrophe is used to indicate a case of ownership or possession. This use is discussed below.

**Tip One:** Determine if you need an apostrophe by rephrasing this way: The \_\_\_\_\_ owned/possessed by \_\_\_\_\_.

- My friendss blue scarf >>> The blue scarf owned by my friend >>> This phrase needs an apostrophe.
- Parkland Colleges new computers >>> The new computers owned by Parkland College >>> This phrase needs an apostrophe.
- The dogs at the end of the road >>> The dogs owned by the end of the road>>>This doesn't make sense; a road can't own dogs. This phrase **does not** need an apostrophe.

**Tip Two:** Once you have determined you need an apostrophe, follow these steps in order:

1. Write the word (singular or plural) as you normally would without the apostrophe.
2. Think of the apostrophe as a "+" sign. Add the "+" to the end of the word you just wrote. c. Change the "+" to an apostrophe.
3. If the word is singular, then add an "s" after the apostrophe.
4. If the word is plural (already ends in "s") omit the final "s." **\*\*See exception below.**

Write out the word	Add the "+" sign	Change "+" to apostrophe and add s
cat cats	cat+ cats+	cat's toy cats' <del>s</del> >>> cats' toys
door doors	door+ doors+	door's lock doors' <del>s</del> >>> doors' locks
company	company+	company's policies
companies	companies+	companies' <del>s</del> policies >>> companies' policies
business	business+	business's profits
businesses	businesses+	businesses' <del>s</del> profits >>> businesses' profits
woman women	woman+ women+	woman's shoes women's shoes
man men	man+ men+	man's wallet men's wallets
child children	child+ children+	child's book children's books
Karen	Karen+	Karen's airline ticket
Mr. Bradley	Mr. Bradley+	Mr. Bradley's parking ticket
Chris	Chris+	Chris's sandwich*
Ms. Jenkins	Ms. Jenkins+	Ms. Jenkins's DVR player*

Usage varies when it comes to words ending in "s." The most common rules are as follows:

\* If a singular word ends in s, (Chris or Los Angeles), add 's. >>> Chris's, Los Angeles's.

\*\*If a word is plural and ends in s, (Bradleys or Williams), omit the final "s" >>> Bradleys'~~s~~, Williams'~~s~~ >>> Bradleys', Williams'