



Apostrophes

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Apostrophes



Apostrophes have three main uses:

1. An apostrophe replaces a letter in a contraction (it's = it is, don't = do not, we've = we have, can't = can not, and so on).
2. An apostrophe is used in a name or an hour (O'Connor, O'Callahan, seven o'clock).
3. An apostrophe is used to indicate a case of ownership or possession. This use will be discussed in the next slides.

Apostrophes



Tip One: Determine if you need an apostrophe by rephrasing your expression this way:
_____ owns/possesses/has _____.

My friends blue scarf is lost. >>> My friend owns/possesses/has a blue scarf. >>> This sentence needs an apostrophe. My friend's blue scarf is lost.

Parkland Colleges new computers are due on Friday. >>> Parkland College owns/possesses/has new computers. >>> This sentence needs an apostrophe. Parkland College's new computers are due on Friday.

Many students homework assignments got lost in the classroom. >>> Many students own/possess/have homework assignments. This sentence needs an apostrophe. Many students' homework assignments got lost in the classroom.

The dogs at the end of the road won't stop barking. >>> The dogs own/possess/have the end of the road. >>> This doesn't make sense; dogs can't own roads. This sentence does not need an apostrophe.

The Super Bowl fans are out of control. >>> The fans own/possess/have the Super Bowl. >>> This doesn't make sense; fans can't own the Super Bowl. This sentence does not need an apostrophe.

Apostrophes



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

1. Write the word (singular or plural) as you normally would without adding any apostrophe. Just write the word first: friend, Parkland College, and brothers.
2. Think of the apostrophe as a “+” sign. Add the “+” to the **end** of the word you just wrote: friend+, Parkland College+, and brothers+.
3. Change the “+” to an apostrophe: friend’, Parkland College’, brothers’.
4. Add an “s” after the apostrophe: friend’s, Parkland College’s, brothers’s
5. If you end up having two s’s in a row (brothers’s), omit the final “s” after the apostrophe: brothers’s >>> brothers’.

Apostrophes



Original Word	“+” sign	Change + to ’ add s
cat (one)	cat+	cat’s
cats (> one)	cats+	cats’s > omit extra s
company (one)	company+	company’s
companies (> one)	companies+	companies’s > omit extra s
woman (one)	woman+	woman’s
women (> one)	women+	women’s
Karen (one)	Karen+	Karen’s
Chris (one)	Chris+	Chris’s *
Mr. Jenkins (one)	Mr. Jenkins+	Mr. Jenkins’s
Smiths (> one)	Smiths +	Smiths’s > omit extra s **

Usage varies when it comes to words ending in “s.” The most commonly stated rules are as follows:

* If a singular word ends in s, add ’s. >>> Chris’s, Mr. Jenkins’s, Los Angeles’s.

**If a word is plural and ends in s, omit the final “s” >>> Bradleys’, Smiths’, Guicks’