

## The Apostrophe

### To show omission

Use an apostrophe to show where a letter or number has been left out.

I'm (I am)	They're (They are)	Can't (Cannot)	Could've (Could have)
She's (She is/she has)	You're (You are)	He'll (He will)	Won't (Will not)
He'd (He would/he had)	We've (We have)	Doesn't (Does not)	Didn't (Did not)
Class of '08 (2008)	In the '60s (1960s)	It's (It is)	Who's (Who is)

### To show possession

1) Use an apostrophe before s to show ownership.

The boy's hat	The dog's tail	Jane's DVD	The boss's office
Men's ties	Women's shoes	People's choice	Children's toys

EXCEPTION: Possessive pronouns already indicate the notion of ownership, so no apostrophe is required (his, hers, theirs, ours, yours, whose, its).

QUESTION: When do you use "it's" or "its"?

ANSWER: "It's" = it is, whereas "its" is the possessive form.

INCORRECT: The school closed it's doors after 50 years. X
CORRECT: The school closed its doors after 50 years.
INCORRECT: The professor who's exams went missing will have to use an alternative method of evaluation. X
CORRECT: The professor whose exams went missing will have to use an alternative method of evaluation.

2) Use an apostrophe before *s* to show ownership of a noun that already ends in *-s*.

James's hat (James' hat is also acceptable in <b><u>non-academic</u></b> styles.)
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NOTE: Do not add another *s* for plural words ending in *-s* and names from the ancient world.

Students' grades	Three friends' letters
Achilles' heel	Jesus' followers

3) Add an apostrophe + *s* to show joint possession of an object.

Todd and Anne's apartment.
INCORRECT: My husband and I's dog. X
CORRECT: My and my husband's dog.

## To form plurals of lowercase letters

An apostrophe is only used to indicate plurals of alphabet letters.

The word "Athabasca" has four a's in it.
Nita's mother constantly stressed minding one's p's and q's.
INCORRECT: Parent's are invited to attend the council meeting.
CORRECT: Parents are invited to attend the council meeting.