

Rules for correct use of apostrophe

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English is a language which is incomplete without grammar and its rules. Grammar has some rules and exceptions to it. All these rules and exceptions make English funny and interesting. One vital part of English grammar are the punctuations. They make a world of difference to your writing. A single error in punctuation can change the sentence and its meaning.



The **apostrophe** ('or') is a punctuation mark in English and it serves the following purposes:

1. The marking of the omission of one or more letters. Contraction is nothing but shortening of words. When you combine two words for shortening you eliminate some letters from both to mix them. As an alternative, you add an apostrophe.(as in the [contraction](#) of *do not* to *don't*).

Examples: *doesn't, wouldn't, it's, can't, you've, etc.*

Incorrect: *does'nt*

More examples

- 1) *They've – they + have*
- 2) *I've – I + have*
- 3) *Should've – should + have*
- 4) *We'll – we + will*
- 5) *Haven't – have + not*
- 6) *She'd – she + would*
- 7) *Can't – can + not*

2. The marking of [possessive case](#). The word possessiveness tells us, when a person owns something we add “s”(s). Adding that creates a possessive form. (as in *the eagle's feathers, or in one month's time*).

- **Examples:**

- 1) “A boss’s wife”. Here the boss has a wife.
- 2) “Emma’s car”. That car belongs to Emma.
- 3) “Carl’s hat”. Carl is the owner of the hat.
- 4) “Ferguson’s Manchester United”. Ferguson and his club.
- 5) “Prince’s crown”. Prince owns the crown.

Even if the last letter has 's' of a word, the apostrophe is added.

- 1) Chris's bicycle.
- 2) Ross's camera.

If there is a plural noun, we add the apostrophe after 's'. But if a plural noun has no 's' at the end, we add the apostrophe first and then 's'.

- 1) A child is a parents' prized possession.
- 2) Girls' hostel.
- 3) The children's toys.

There are times when we do not need an apostrophe.

Example:

- 1) Whose, ours, theirs, hers and many other possessive pronouns.
- 2) Cameras, Laptops, CDs are some plural nouns where we do not add an apostrophe.

Apostrophes are also used in the numerical terms. For instance, when we talk about an event which happened a decade ago or a century ago, we use an apostrophe. For instance,

- 1) In the early 90's, India took its step towards betterment.
- 2) Summer of '69 was a famous song by Bryan Adams.

Its or It's?

This is one place where people tend to make mistakes. There is a rule you need to follow to get it right.



'Its' is used when something is belonging to the subject. It is a possessive pronoun.

- 1) The dog pulled on its leash.
- 2) The squirrel is known for its swift movements.

It's is the place where the apostrophe is added. It's is made by two words, 'it' and 'is' or "it" and "has"

- 1) It's hot outside the building.
- 2) It's been a long day.

The above examples will help you understand the appropriate use of an apostrophe. It is important to understand the concept as it helps [improve your English](#) and improve your communication skills. By joining

an online spoken English course, you can further improve your knowledge of grammar.

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-By Shailja Varma

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