

Apostrophes

Identifying and using apostrophes in contractions and possessives

The word 'apostrophe' comes from the Greek words meaning to turn from or omission. After commas, apostrophes seem to be the most misused punctuation mark.

Apostrophes are used for only two purposes: to indicate a **contraction** or **ownership**.

☑ Use the apostrophe with contractions. The apostrophe is always placed where the letter has been removed.

For example: couldn't, don't, isn't, you're, she's, it's- which is "it is." (N.B. This is the contraction, not the possessive.

Re-write adding apostrophes for contractions.

1a/ It is not your turn.

1b/ They should have gone to the beach yesterday.

1c/ It would not be a good day to go swimming.

1d/ He is not available today.

Possessive pronouns don't require an apostrophe.

For example: Whose book is that? NOT Who's book is that?

That book is his. NOT That book is his'.)

Apostrophe to show possession.

Singular nouns

Place the apostrophe before the s to show singular possession.

For example: the girl's arm the father's arm.

Singular nouns take an 's, even if the noun ends with s. for example Mrs Thomas's bag.

Plural and collective nouns not ending in s also take an 's. e.g. children's playtime.

Re-write adding apostrophes for possession and contractions.

2a/ Thats Johns bike.

2b/ Thats the boys bike that was stolen yesterday.

2c/ Isnt that the tribes ceremonial bowl.

Plural nouns

Plural nouns that end with s have an apostrophe added after the s.

For example the students' books. The scissors' blades were blunt.

Re-write adding apostrophes for possession.

2a/ Those are the students books.

2b/ Many teachers cars were damaged in the storm.

2c/ The soldiers rifles were damaged in the flood.

Indefinite pronouns can also show ownership by using an apostrophe.
For example One – one's – It is best to mind one's own business.

Re-write adding apostrophes for possession.

2a/ I heard that somebodys bike was stolen yesterday.

2b/ Is this anyones drink bottle

Apostrophes are often incorrectly used. The most common mistakes are:
used for plurals

its and it's

you're and your

with shortened forms CD's (incorrect) rather than CDs

indicating decades as 1870's (incorrect) rather than 1870s.

Apostrophes are not used in the plural form of acronyms or decades. For example URLs or 1950s.

Re-write with correct punctuation

2a/ My cousins couldnt believe that the girls purse was stolen.

2b/ Twelve boy scouts found those passengers suitcases, under the bridge.

2c/ Its the girls cat.

2d/ The girls pencils were found in the bottom of her desk.