

Grammar

Using apostrophes to show possession

Apostrophes

An apostrophe shows that one thing belongs to another. To make a singular noun possessive, add an apostrophe + s.

Bill's bicycle

To make a regular plural noun possessive, add an apostrophe after the letter s.

the kids' bicycles

Do not use an apostrophe to show that a noun is plural.

Possessive Pronouns

Pronouns, such as *him, her, they, and them* are stand-ins for proper nouns; in other words, they refer to someone or something specific without using the proper noun or name.

Possessive pronouns show ownership. Some are used alone, while others are used to modify or describe a noun.

Used alone: *mine, yours, his, hers, ours, theirs, whose*

EXAMPLE: That computer is **hers**. That car is **mine**.

Used as modifier: *my, your, his, her, its, ours, their, whose*

EXAMPLE: That is **her** computer. The car needs **its** clutch replaced.

*Note that **none** of the possessive pronouns uses an apostrophe to show ownership. Pay extra attention to your use of possessive pronouns, as several of them sound like some commonly-used contractions. For example, watch your use of the following commonly confused possessive pronouns and contractions: **Your/you're, its/its, their/they're, and Whose/Who's.**

Activity: In each sentence, decide if the underlined words need an apostrophe. If an apostrophe is needed, add one in the correct place. If no apostrophe is needed, you do not need to write anything.

Example: The letter suggests the games age appropriateness and appears on the front of the box.

The letter suggests the game's age appropriateness and appears on the front of the box.

1. Isabelle has wonderful memories of visiting her grandparents farm every summer.
2. Robert felt like the clocks hands were moving backwards as he listened to his parents lecture him.
3. As the snow melted, they could see the unrakedleaves from the giant maple tree blanketing the yard.
4. The executive managersoffices are all very stylishly decorated.
5. My cats desire to catch a bird is very obvious as she sits in the window and watches her prey.
6. One of his brother-in-laws new snowmobiles was stolen last night.
7. Janices keys are always getting misplaced, so she often has to get a ride to work in her friends car.