

# Situations Where English Uses the Apostrophe

1. **Contractions** (to show missing letters)
  - *I am* → *I'm*
  - *He is* → *He's*
  - *Do not* → *Don't*
2. **Possession** (to show ownership)
  - Singular nouns: *The dog's leash* (the leash of the dog)
  - Plural nouns ending in *s*: *The teachers' lounge* (the lounge of the teachers)
  - Plural nouns not ending in *s*: *The children's toys*
3. **Plural Forms of Letters, Numbers, and Symbols** (less common)
  - *Mind your p's and q's.*
  - *She was born in the '90s.*

## Golden Rules to Remember

### ✓ No apostrophes in simple plurals!

- ✗ *Apple's for sale* → ✓ *Apples for sale*

### ✓ If it's a contraction, an apostrophe replaces the missing letter(s).

- *You're* = *You are*, not *Your*

### ✓ For singular possession, add 's—even if the word ends in s.

- *James's book* (also acceptable: *James' book*)

### ✓ For plural possession, place the apostrophe after the s.

- *The girls' team* (team of the girls)

Here are some **tricky cases** where apostrophe use can be confusing:

## 1. It's vs. Its

- **It's** = *It is* or *It has* (*It's raining* = *It is raining*)
- **Its** = Possessive (*The dog wagged its tail.*)


🚀 **Rule:** If you can replace it with *it is* or *it has*, use **it's**. Otherwise, use **its**.

---



## 2. Singular Names Ending in "s"


- **Charles's book** (*or* Charles' book—both are acceptable)
- **St. James's Church**

 **Rule:** Traditionally, add 's, but some style guides accept just ' for classical or biblical names (*Jesus' teachings*).

---

## 3. Joint vs. Individual Possession

- **Tom and Jerry's show** (They share ownership of one show.)
- **Tom's and Jerry's bikes** (Each has their own bike.)

 **Rule:** If they own something **together**, add 's to the last name only. If they own separate things, both names get 's.

---

## 4. Apostrophes with Time Expressions

- **A day's work** (work of one day)
- **Two weeks' notice** (notice of two weeks)

 **Rule:** For time expressions, **use an apostrophe** when something belongs to the time period.

---

## 5. Plural Abbreviations & Acronyms


- **CDs, VIPs, FAQs** (*No apostrophe needed!*)
- But: **Do's and don'ts** (*apostrophe in "do's" for clarity*)

 **Rule:** Most plural abbreviations **don't need apostrophes**, unless it helps with readability.

---

## 6. Who's vs. Whose

- **Who's** = *Who is* or *Who has* (*Who's calling?*)
- **Whose** = Possessive (*Whose book is this?*)

 **Rule:** If you can replace it with *who is* or *who has*, use **who's**. Otherwise, use **whose**.

---



## Test your skills with a few examples

### 1. Choose the correct option:

- a) The cat licked **it's** / **its** paw.
- b) **Whose** / **Who's** coming to the party?
- c) I need **two weeks'** / **two week's** vacation.
- d) This is **James's** / **James'** guitar.
- e) The teacher didn't check the **students'** / **student's** homework yet.

### 2. Fix the apostrophe mistakes (if any):

- a) The dogs tail was wagging happily.
- b) The Smiths house is on the corner.
- c) I have three CD's in my bag.
- d) She borrowed her brothers book.
- e) Its a beautiful day outside!

### KEY

#### 1. Choose the correct option:

- a) The cat licked **its** paw. (*Possessive form, no apostrophe!*)
- b) **Who's** coming to the party? (*Who's = Who is*)
- c) I need **two weeks'** vacation. (*Vacation of two weeks → apostrophe after "s"*)
- d) This is **James's** guitar. (*Singular possessive, both **James's** and **James'** are acceptable, but **James's** is more common in modern usage.*)
- e) The teacher didn't check the **students'** homework yet. (*Homework of the students → plural possessive*)

---

#### 2. Fix the apostrophe mistakes:

- a) The **dog's** tail was wagging happily. (*Possessive form of "dog"*)
- b) The **Smiths'** house is on the corner. (*House of the Smiths → plural possessive*)
- c) I have three **CDs** in my bag. (*No apostrophe needed for plurals of abbreviations!*)
- d) She borrowed her **brother's** book. (*Book of her brother → singular possessive*)
- e) **It's** a beautiful day outside! (*It's = It is*)