

## The Apostrophe

...is used to show possession or ownership as well as to indicate omitted letters and numerals.

### A. Possession

1. Add an **'s** to form the possessive of singular and plural nouns and indefinite pronouns that do not end in *s* or with an *s* or *z* sound.

Kari's house	the child's toy
Somebody's shoe	the children's toy

2. Add **'s** to form the possessive of singular nouns ending in *s* or with an *s* or *z* sound.

Chris's binder	Prince Lorenz's castle
The boss's decision	princess's tiara

\*Add only an apostrophe if the extra *s* creates awkward pronunciation

Euripides' plays	Moses' gospel
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3. Add only an apostrophe to form the possessive of plural nouns ending in *s* or with an *s* or *z* sound.

The boys' coats	The Smiths' car
The students' answers	the runners' speeds

4. To form the possessive of compound nouns, add **'s** to only the last word.

My brother-in-law's foot	my sergeant-at-arm's command
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5. To show joint ownership, make only the last noun possessive.

Jerry and Tom's practical joke.	(They share the joke.)
Jerry's and Tom's practical jokes.	(They each have their own joke.)

### B. Omitted letters or numbers in contractions

I am = I'm      can not = can't      ham 'n eggs      the hurricane of '05

### C. Plural of letters, numbers, abbreviations, and words cited as words.

Watch your p's and q's.

There are three ATM's in the mall.

Count to 1000 by 10's.

I've had enough of your no's for today.

I received 5 A's and 2 B's.

#### ***Shorthand version of the possession rules.***

The cat's toy	one cat, one toy
The cat's toys	one cat, many toys
The cats' toy	many cats, one toy
The cats' toys	many cats, many toys