

Use of the Apostrophe

The Apostrophe is used ONLY in the following situations:

a) To indicate an informal contraction:

e.g.	Terry's here	(= Terry is here)
	You've caught a cold	(= you have caught a cold)
	I haven't checked	(= I have not checked)
	It's a boy!	(= it is a boy!)
	I don't know	(= I do not know)
	The cat's gone	(= the cat is gone)

b) To indicate possession:

For all singular nouns, and plural nouns not ending in *s*, add 's:¹

e.g.	the cat's collar	(= the collar of the cat)
	the road's end	(= the end of the road)
	the women's movement	(= the movement of the women)
	the princess's crown	(= the crown of the princess)
	the boss's daughter	(= the daughter of the boss)

For plurals ending in *s*, add ':

e.g.	the cats' collars	(= the collars of the cats)
	the princesses' crowns	(= the crowns of the princesses)

NOTE: Possessive pronouns do not take an apostrophe:
e.g. my, your, **yours, his, hers, its, theirs**

In particular, make sure you understand the difference between the following:

its	(= belonging to it)	whose	(= belonging to whom)
it's	(= it is)	who's	(= who is)

¹ There is an exception to this. Names of **classical and biblical people** ending in *s* have a **straight apostrophe in the possessive**. For example, **Jesus' disciples** (*not* Jesus's disciples), **Pericles' foreign policy**, **Plautus' use of metatheatre**, **Maecenas' literary circle**.