

The apostrophe has three uses: 1) to form possessive nouns; 2) to show the omission of letters; and 3) to indicate plurals of letters, numbers, and symbols. **Do not** use apostrophes to form possessive **pronouns** (i.e. *his/her* computer) or **noun** plurals that are not possessives.

1) To Show Possession

To see if you have a possessive, turn the phrase around and make an “of ...” phrase.	Example: the newspaper’s column = the column of the newspaper
To show possession by a singular noun, add ’s to the singular form of the word (even if it ends with the letter s.)	Example: the owner’s car. Example: James’s hat.
Add ’s to the plural forms that do not end in s.	Example: the children’s game Example: the geese’s honking
Add ’s to the end of plural nouns that end in s.	Example: the houses’ roofs Example: three friends’ letters
Add ’s to the last noun in a group to show joint possession of an object.	Example: Todd and Anne’s apartment.

2) To Show Omission of Letters

In contractions, one or more letters (or numbers) have been omitted. The apostrophe shows this omission. **Contractions are common only in speaking and informal writing.	Examples: don’t = do not I’m = I am shouldn’t = should not didn’t = did not
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3) To Form Plurals of Letters, Numbers, and Symbols

Although apostrophes are usually not used to form plurals, they are inserted in the creation of the plurals of letters, numbers, and symbols.

Two A’s = two letters that happen to both be A.	Example: Nita got A’s on her Biology quizzes.
Six 5’s = six numbers that are each 5.	Example: There are six 5’s in my SSN.
Many &’s = Many ampersands	Example: That printed page has too many &’s on it.

Do Not Use Apostrophes for Possessive Pronouns or for Noun Plurals

His, her, its, my, yours, and ours are possessive pronouns.	Examples: The group made its decision. **(Note: <i>it’s</i> is the contraction meaning <i>it is</i> .)
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