

PUNCTUATION 1: APOSTROPHES

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An apostrophe looks like this:

In writing, we use them for two reasons:

- 1. When a word or words have been shortened (omission)**
- 2. To show that something belongs to someone or something (possession)**

1. When a word or words have been shortened (omission)

For example:

It is / It has → It's

I am → I'm

He is / He has → He's

You are → You're

But note:

***You're (you are) is different from
Your (belonging to you)***

They have → They've

Have not → Haven't

Should not → Shouldn't

But note:

Will not → Won't

Some more irregular examples:

Who would → Who'd

Pick and mix → Pick'n'mix

Hallow evening → Hallowe'en

She would have → she'd've

Of the clock → o'clock

2. To show that something belongs to someone or something (possession)

This lets us say something in a shorter way.

For example:

Instead of saying: The coat of John
we can say: John's coat

We put the apostrophe after the owner and add an s. In this case, John is the owner.

Some more possession examples:

- The man's coat got soaking wet in the rain.
- Patrick's alarm clock did not go off so he was late for work.
- The dog's lead snapped and he ran away.
- The book's cover was damaged so it was on sale at a reduced price.
- Today's weather will be warm and sunny.

An important exception

Things that belong to "it" do not take an apostrophe. (As with "hers" "his" and "ours")

The dog chased its tail

**However, if there is more than one owner,
the apostrophe comes after the s.**

For example:

Instead of saying: The tank of the soldiers
we can say: The soldiers' tank

***The apostrophe comes after the s because
there is more than one soldier.***

More examples with more than one owner:

- The girls' coats got soaked when they got caught in the storm.
- In the final competition, all the dancers' routines were fantastic.
- Battersea Dogs' Home was established in 1860.
- Ten years' hard work was at stake.

Tip: If you are finding it hard to remember where to place the apostrophe, ask yourself if there is one owner, or more than one.

Remember, there's more than one girl at this school, so it's Walderslade Girls' School!

If the owner has an **irregular plural** that **does not end in s** the apostrophe goes after the complete plural noun but before the **s**.

- The women's cloakroom is down the corridor on the right.
- He really deserved to win the People's Choice Award.
- The sheep's coats were heavy and matted by springtime.