



Apostrophes

Possessives and Indication of Plurality

- Add 's to the singular form or plural forms that do not end in s.
Ex: the owner's house, the children's play house
- Add only an ' to the plural nouns that end in s.
Ex: three friends' houses
- Add an 's or only an ' to singular proper nouns that end in s.
Ex: James's house or James' house
- Add 's to the end of compound words or the last noun in a joint or group possession.
Ex: my brother-in-law's house, Todd and Anne's house

Omission of Letters and Numbers

In contractions, one or more letters have been omitted and the apostrophe shows this omission. Contractions are common in speaking and informal writing but should not be used in formal writing.
Ex: didn't = did not let's = let us it's = it is

Add an ' to the beginning of a year when the first two numerals are omitted.
Ex: '98

When Not to Use Apostrophes

Do not use apostrophes for possessive pronouns or (in most cases) to form plurals.

Wrong: his' house Right: his house
Wrong: kind's of houses Right: kinds of houses
Wrong: it's house Right: its house
Wrong: 1920's Right: 1920s
Wrong: VCR's Right: VCRs
Wrong: ABCs Right: ABC's
Wrong: four's Right: fours