

## APOSTROPHES

Apostrophes are a type of punctuation mark that are used to mark omitted letters in a word and to show possession in nouns and pronouns.

### WHEN TO USE APOSTROPHES

#### To make contractions

Apostrophes are used in contractions to replace omitted letters in verb phrases or numbers in decades.

- Don't = do not
- '90s = 1990s

Check with your instructor before using contractions as they can be too informal for certain genres.

#### To show possession

Apostrophes are used to indicate possession or ownership. Whether the noun is singular or plural impacts how you use an apostrophe to create possessive nouns.

If a noun is singular or is plural and does not end in an s, add an apostrophe and s (--'s). If a noun is plural and ends in an s, add an apostrophe after the s (--s').

- The wind was so strong that the dog's toy and Charles's hat blew away while they were walking.
- The boys' coats are all missing from the closet.
- Her children's school is so big they have two campuses.

### WHEN NOT TO USE APOSTROPHES

#### To make pronouns possessive

"It's" is a contraction meaning it is or it has; "its" is the possessive form of "it."

#### To make nouns plural

Plural forms of nouns only take an -s at the end. e.g., The phones (plural) or the phone's cord (possessive)

#### To indicate the plurals of alphabetical letters or numbers

You will not use an apostrophe with abbreviations or numbers except in instances where an apostrophe helps with clarity.

- How many CDs do you still have?
- Do you have any 10s in your hand?
- Cross your t's and dot your i's. (Cross your ts and dot your is would look confusing!)

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