

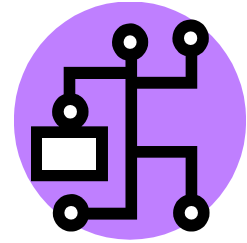
Quick Tip of the Week

Did you know . . .

Apostrophes (a punctuation mark in the English language) have only two functions:

1. They are used to indicate missing letters (such as in a contraction).
2. They are used in a word to make it possessive (to show ownership)

Ok, so most apostrophe uses seem pretty easy to understand, right? But take a look at the examples that show possession for a word ending in -s (like Chris) or for plural forms of nouns which would cause the words to also end in an -s (like cats). These can become pretty confusing if you let them, so let me explain them a bit further.



Contractions/Missing Letters	Possessive
They're nice. = They are nice.	Tommy's car = the car belongs to Tommy
I can't go. = I cannot go.	Dog's bone = the bone belongs to the dog
She didn't sing. = She did not sing.	Chris' dog. = The dog belongs to Chris. (notice where the apostrophe is)
I won't like it. = I will not like it.	The cats' food. = The food belongs to more than one cat. (Note: this is a plural possessive.)
It's sad. = It is sad. It's been sad. = It has been sad.	Its onion. = The onion belongs to it. (Notice there is NO apostrophe to show possession for IT!)

There seems to be a large debate about whether or not words ending in -s should be given a simple apostrophe or an apostrophe -s. Like:

- Moses' tablets vs Moses's tablets
- Tess' shoes vs Tess's shoes
- Kansas' toll roads vs Kansas's toll roads

Truth is, depending on the style format your Instructor uses it would be correct either way. But the easiest rule of the thumb, and the most commonly accepted form, is to simply add the *apostrophe* (') to the end of the word. I recommend you always stick with this method to be safe. If your Instructor prefers the *apostrophe -s* method, trust me, they will let you know.

Now, let's talk a bit about plural possessives and it's/its. These seem to cause the most apostrophe confusion. If the plural noun does not end in an -s then the answer is simple...add the apostrophe (') -s.

The **children's** school is far.

The **band's** tour schedule is hectic.

But if the plural requires you to add an -s or -es to the end of the word then simply add the *apostrophe* (') to the end of the word because the -s is already there!

The **boxes'** weight is too heavy.

Our **aunts'** husbands are nice.

And finally, it's/its. Remember that the *apostrophe* (') in it's **always**, *always*, **ALWAYS** indicates the missing letter -i to mean it is. So never use the contraction it's unless you could correctly replace it with the words *it is*. Otherwise, when you use the words its (without an apostrophe) you are representing a possessive form and are telling your readers that something belongs to IT.

<http://grammar.quickanddirtytips.com/>