

The Apostrophe: Possessives

The possessive is usually produced by adding an apostrophe plus s ('s) to the noun; however, if the noun already ends in s, just the apostrophe is usually added.

example:	the lady's car	(one lady owns a car)
	the ladies' luncheon	(several ladies are attending lunch)
	the teacher's classes	(one teacher)
	the teachers' classes	(several teachers)

Use the apostrophe to show a noun's possession of something: for example, my brother's basketball, Mr. Smith's house, the teacher's books. The apostrophe can also show a relationship between the noun and something: the girl's innocence, the teacher's tactics, the day's news, the society's fault.

The apostrophe is not used in the possessive forms of personal pronouns: his, hers, ours, yours, its, theirs. It is used, however, in the possessive forms of indefinite pronouns, such as one (one's house), everyone (to everyone's amazement), someone (someone's party).

The contraction it's (meaning it is) is different from its (meaning "of it" or "belonging to it").

example: It's (the contraction of it is) time to give the fish its (showing possession) food.

EXERCISE In the following sentences, correct the noun or pronoun.

1. Its your turn to do the dishes.
2. A students lack of interest is not necessarily the teachers fault.
3. Mrs. Browns daughter sends her flower on Mothers Day.
4. The boys bicycle was broken by the bullies down the street.
5. Soneones car is blocking the driveway.
6. Yesterdays news is as old as last weeks news.
7. Lets borrow your fathers car and go for a drive.
8. Its going to be rough sailing since its my turn at the rudder.
9. The United States losses were much less than Europes in World War II.
10. The girls locker room is just as bad as the boys locker room.
11. The gentlemans journal was locked and kept on the shelf.
12. When parents respect each other's opinions, the children and the marriage will be better adjusted to cope with todays problems.

Answer Key

1. It's
2. student's, teacher's
3. Mrs. Brown's, flowers, Mother's
4. boy's
5. Someone's
6. Yesterday's, week's
7. Let's, father's
8. It's, it's
9. United States', Europe's
10. girls', boys'
11. gentleman's
12. today's