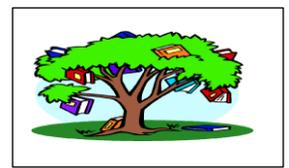


Toward Better Literacy: Reference Outlines



Apostrophes: Possessives and Contractions

The **apostrophe** forms **possessives** of noun, shows the omission of letters in **contractions** and indicates the **plural** form of certain letters.

Forming Possessives:

- ❖ Add (**'s**) to singular nouns and indefinite pronouns (**everyone**) even if the word ends in an "s".

the woman's hat Charles's house the boss's rules everyone's favorite

- ❖ Some possessive proper nouns are commonly spelled without an apostrophe (e.g. **Walgreens, Governors Island**), but others include it (**McDonald's, Macy's Department Store**).

- ❖ For plural nouns that do not end in "s", add: **'s**. Example: **children's games**

- ❖ For plural nouns that end in "s", add *only* an apostrophe. Example: **My two cats' food**

- ❖ When two or more nouns show joint possession of an object, only the last noun is punctuated. Example: **Nathan and John's timesheets**

- ❖ Don't make the common mistake of mixing **it's** ("it is") with **its**, the possessive pronoun. Possessive pronouns like *his, hers, its, theirs, yours, and ours* never take an apostrophe.

Contractions:

- ❖ A **contraction** is a word (or set of numbers) in which one or more letters have been omitted. The location of that omission is marked by an apostrophe.

don't = do not I'm = I am could've = could have '57 = 1957

- ❖ Use contractions carefully, usually only if you are quoting someone, writing dialog or writing informally. **Academic or formal writing should not contain contractions.**

Plurals with Certain Letters:

- ❖ Use an apostrophe when writing the plural of lowercase letters.
Example: **Mind your p's and q's.**

- ❖ Some authorities also prefer the use of an apostrophe when writing the plural of numerals and uppercase letters. Ex.: **The student got all A's and B's.**

- ❖ Uppercase acronyms do not take an apostrophe. Example: **I made two CDs.**

- ❖ For years, no apostrophe: Example: **In the 1960s**