

# APOSTROPHES

## Possessives

- Singular add 's
- Plural ending in -s add '
- Plural nouns not ending in -s, add 's

## Singular possessor

Tony's car is not running well	<i>The car that belongs to Tony...</i>
Marx's theories are certainly...	<i>The theories of Marx...</i>
He got it straight from the horse's mouth	<i>...from the mouth of the horse.</i>
The baby's toys are all over the floor.	<i>The toys that belong to the baby...</i>
The doll's eyes looked sad.	<i>The eyes of the doll...</i>
A second's head start...	<i>A head start of a second...</i>
His theory's influence has been enormous.	<i>The influence of his theory...</i>
My mother-in-law's recipe...	<i>The recipe that belongs to my mother-in-law...</i>

## Plural possessor

The Rosses' house is collapsing.	<i>The house that belongs to the Rosses...</i>
My friends' car broke down.	<i>The car that belongs to my friends...</i>
He looked into the horses' mouths	<i>...the mouths of the horses</i>
The psychologist disapproved of the babies' toys	<i>... the toys that belong to the babies.</i>
In two months' time...	<i>In a time of two months...</i>

## Irregular plural

The children's mother was worried.	The mother of the children...
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## Joint possession

My aunt and uncle's house (Same thing possessed by both.)  
Lucy and Maud's terrible adventure  
**but**  
Her niece's and nephew's bicycles

## Possessive pronouns never have apostrophes!

**Its** handle is broken  
I saw **whose** car hit the truck  
Perry noted **its** effect.  
It is **hers**. It's hers.  
Mary knows those books are **theirs**.

## Special cases

By tradition:  
Jesus' name                      Moses' tablets

Because of pronunciation:  
Names of more than one syllable ending in -eez sound  
Euripedes' play                  Ramses' sarcophagus

## Practice Exercises

### Add an apostrophe where needed in the following sentences:

1. My mothers heirloom dishes are missing.
2. Phils two old cars gave him headaches.
3. Not surprisingly, as Susans practice time increased, her scores improved.
4. The little shop lost its lease.
5. All the womens suitcases were stolen from the bus.
6. Some people felt the students concerns had been ignored.
7. Her cats fur was matted. (1 cat)
8. Her cats fur was matted. (3 cats)

### Find and correct the errors in the sentences below. Some sentences have no errors; mark these "correct" in the space provided..

1. Its about time that you passed this test.  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Pamela won a years worth of groceries  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. My parents car is 12 years old.  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. The babies hand was hurt by the hot water.  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. The men's section is behind the escalator.  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Damocleses sword was quite worrisome.  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Dorises book received excellent reviews  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Stanley lived above the only café, Jacks Java Joint.  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. Three teenage boy's can eat an enormous amount of pizza.  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. Sara and Joe spent a great deal of time helping a friend of their's.  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. They cleared the night's accumulation of ice from the roove's of the houses.  
\_\_\_\_\_
12. Joes Fine Meat's is the best place for quality steak's!  
\_\_\_\_\_

### **Practice Exercises (Answers)**

**Add an apostrophe where needed in the following sentences:**

1. My mothers heirloom dishes are missing.  
mother's
2. Phils two old cars gave him headaches.  
Phil's
3. Not surprisingly, as Susans practice time increased, her scores improved.  
Susan's

4. The little shop lost its lease.  
No apostrophe in its when possessive noun
5. All the womens suitcases were stolen from the bus.  
women's
6. Some people felt the students concerns had been ignored.  
if one student: student's OR if more than one: students'
7. Her cats fur was matted. (1 cat)  
cat's
8. Her cats fur was matted. (3 cats)  
cats'

**Find and correct the errors in the sentences below. Some sentences have no errors; mark these "correct" in the space provided..**

1. Its about time that you passed this test.  
It is (formal) or It's (informal)
2. Pamela won a years worth of groceries  
year's
3. My parents car is 12 years old.  
Parents'
4. The babies hand was hurt by the hot water.  
baby's
5. The men's section is behind the escalator.  
no error
6. Damocleses sword was quite worrisome.  
Damocles'
7. Dorises book received excellent reviews  
Doris's
8. Stanley lived above the only café, Jacks Java Joint.  
Jack's Java Joint
9. Three teenage boy's can eat an enormous amount of pizza.  
boys
10. Sara and Joe spent a great deal of time helping a friend of their's.  
theirs

11. They cleared the night's accumulation of ice from the roove's of the houses.  
roofs
12. Joes Fine Meat's is the best place for quality steak's!  
Joe's Fine Meats/steaks

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