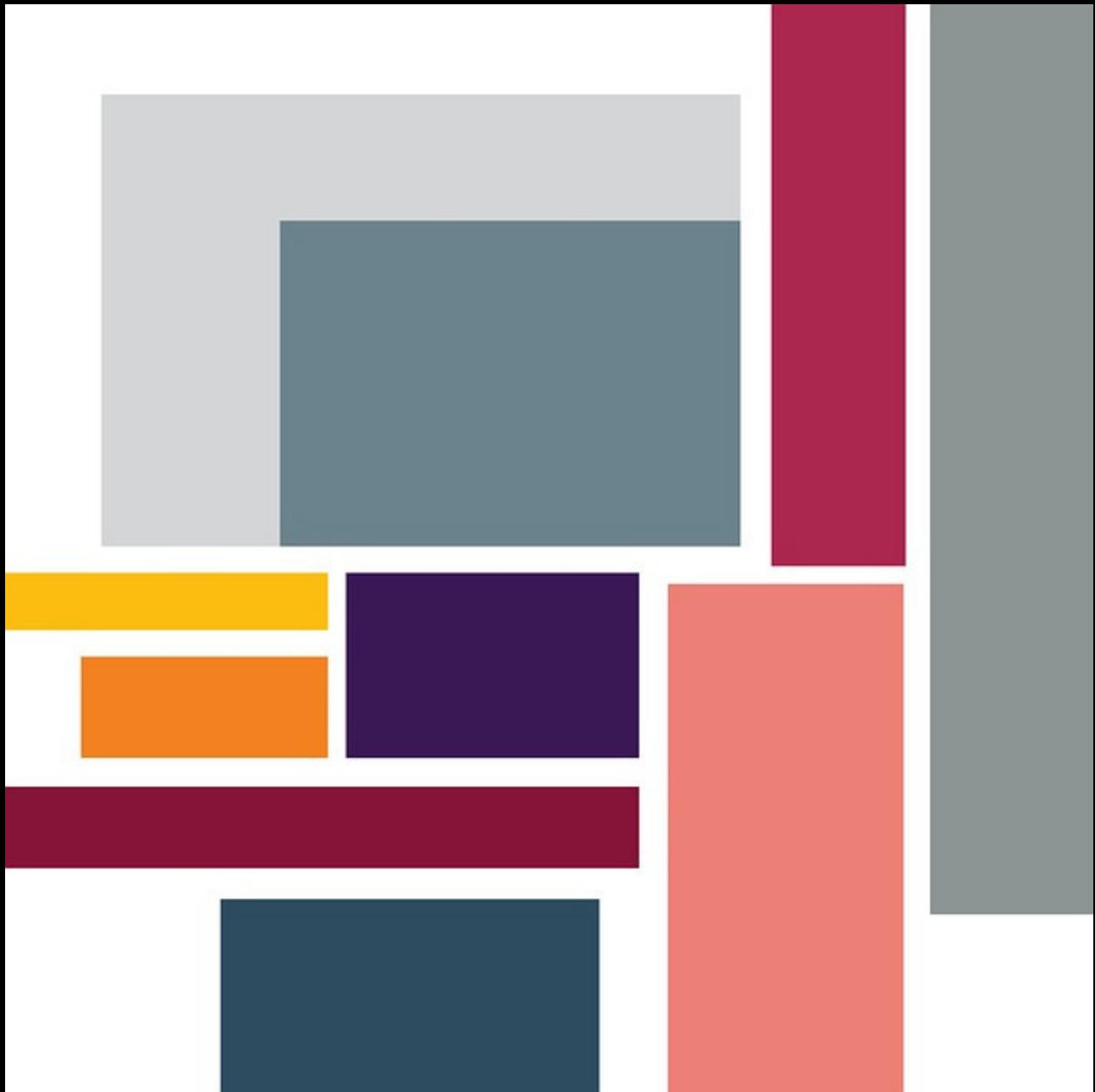


Apostrophes



Apostrophes

Lesson & Exercises

Singular	Plural (-s, -es)	Singular Possessive (-'s)	Plural Possessive (-s')
Bird	Birds	Bird's	Birds'
Business	Businesses	Business's	Businesses'

To form the **plural** of a regular noun, add *-s*. When a singular noun ends in *-s*, add *-es*. Do **not** add an apostrophe.

- Correct: The **birds** are flying. = More than one bird is flying.
- Correct: The **businesses** are open today. = More than one business is open today.
- Correct: The **Wangs** are home this evening. = The Wang family is home this evening.

To form the **possessive** of a singular noun, add *apostrophe + -s*, even for nouns whose singular form ends in *-s*.

- Correct: The **bird's** wings are red. = The wings of the bird are red.
- Correct: The **business's** policy is new. = The policy of the business is new.

In general, this rule also applies to names, including ones that end in *-s*.

- Correct: **Mrs. Wang's** coat = The coat belonging to Mrs. Wang
- Correct: **Alice's** backpack = The backpack belonging to Alice
- Correct: **Douglas's** cup of coffee = The cup of coffee belonging to Douglas

Note that in the case of well-known historical or literary figures whose names end in *-s*, it is acceptable to use an apostrophe alone. This exception accounts for much of the confusion surrounding apostrophes.

- Correct: **Dickens'** novels = The novels written by Dickens
- Correct: **Moses'** staff = The staff belonging to Moses

To form the **possessive** of a plural noun, add *-s* or *-es* + *apostrophe*. Note that while the apostrophe comes **before** the *-s* when making singular nouns possessive, it comes **after** the *-s* when making plural nouns possessive.

Correct: The **birds'** wings are red. = The wings of the birds are red.

Correct: The **businesses'** policies are new = The policies of the business are new.

Correct: The **Wangs'** house is blue. = The house belonging to the Wangs is blue.

The plural forms of **irregular nouns** are not created by adding *-s* to their singular forms. Instead, these nouns change in a variety of ways in the plural forms. Some common examples are listed below.

Singular	Plural
Child	Children
Fish	Fish
Foot	Feet
Mouse	Mice
Person	People
(Wo)man	(Wo)men

To form the possessive of a singular irregular noun, add *apostrophe* + *-s*, just as you would for a regular noun.

Correct: The **mouse's** whiskers = The whiskers of the mouse

Correct: The **child's** books = The books belonging to the child

To form the possessive of a plural irregular noun, also add *apostrophe* + *-s*.

Correct: The **mice's** whiskers = The whiskers of the mice

Correct: The **children's** books = The books belonging to the children

Note that because these plural forms are already different from their singular forms, the fact that both singular and plural possessive are formed by adding *apostrophe* + *-s* does not cause confusion.

As a general rule, you can determine whether a noun should be possessive by checking the word after it. If that word is a noun, the noun is possessive and should take an apostrophe. If you think about it, this is entirely logical: the only thing a noun can possess is another noun.

Incorrect: The dogs fur is gray.

Because *fur* is a noun – that is, you can put *the* in front of it – an apostrophe is needed.

Correct: The dog's fur is gray.

Contraction with Verb

Apostrophe + *-s* is also used to form a **contraction** between a noun and the verb *is* or *has*.

Correct: The **artist's** known for her abstract sculptures. = The **artist is** known for her abstract sculptures.

Correct: The **reporter's** worked all over the world. = The **reporter has** worked all over the world.