

Grammar Practice: Apostrophes

There are two main uses for apostrophes:

- To show the omission of one or more letters in a contraction.
- To show ownership or possession.

Apostrophes in Contractions:

A contraction is formed when two words are combined to make one word. An apostrophe is used to show where letters are omitted in forming the contraction.

Examples:

- have + not = haven't (the o in *not* has been omitted)
- I + will = I'll (the *wi* in *will* has been omitted)
- It + is = it's (the i in *is* has been omitted)

Note: Do not confuse the contraction "it's" with the possessive pronoun "its"

Apostrophes to Show Ownership or Possession:

The apostrophe and (s), if the word does not end in (s), is often the quickest and easiest way to show possession.

Examples:

- Mark's umbrella
- Children's toys

Points to remember:

1. The ('s) goes with the owner or possessor (in the examples given, *Mark* and *children*). What follows is the person or thing possessed (in the examples given, *the umbrella* and *the toys*).
2. An apostrophe and (s) are used to show possession with a singular word even if the word already ends in (s): *Doris's* purse (the purse belongs to *Doris*).
3. Plural words already ending in (s) take the apostrophe after the (s): *The boys'* clubhouse; *The twins'* birthday party.

Practice

Complete the sentences by using the correct possessive form of the noun.

1. Be careful, the _____ (knife) edge is very sharp.
2. All of the _____ (nations) leaders were present at the summit.
3. The _____ (club) budget is posted on the web.
4. David stopped when he noticed the _____ (penny) glimmer at the bottom of the pond.
5. David stopped when he noticed two _____ (penny) glimmering at the bottom of the pond.

Choose the possessive noun that should fill the blank.

6. By the end of the experiment, the _____ smell was unbearable. (fungi)
 - a. fungi's
 - b. fungis's
 - c. fungis'
 - d. fungis
7. Ashley pulled back the drapes to let the _____ light in. (sun)
 - a. suns
 - b. suns'
 - c. suns's
 - d. sun's
8. The lawyer proved that his _____ rights were violated. (clients)
 - a. clients'
 - b. client's
 - c. clients
 - d. clients's
9. The smell of the _____ cookies wafted through the town. (bakery)
 - a. bakerys
 - b. bakerys'
 - c. bakery's
 - d. bakerys's

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| 1. knife's |
| 2. nations' |
| 3. club's |
| 4. penny's |
| 5. pennies |
| 6. A |
| 7. D |
| 8. A |
| 9. C |