

## Uses

Apostrophes show possession. This means they indicate ownership or belonging. When they are used in this way, they are often followed by an "s."

e.g. women's rights      e.g. Chris's (or Chris') house  
e.g. the dog's tail      e.g. the baby's toy

There is one exception to this rule: if the owner is plural (i.e. is a group or collection of things) and the word already ends in "s," we add just an apostrophe.

e.g. the boxes' lids (i.e. the lids belonging to several boxes)

Apostrophes indicate missing letters or numbers. When two words are joined together in a contraction, letters are often left out. An apostrophe stands in place of those missing letters.

e.g. I've = I ~~have~~  
e.g. can't = can ~~not~~

When we use abbreviations for decades, we use apostrophes in the same way.

e.g. the '90s, the '50s

## Misuses

Apostrophes do NOT show plurals. Do NOT use an apostrophe just because there are multiple things.

e.g. There are 14 boy's and girl's. **[INCORRECT]**

Also, don't confuse "its" and "it's."

it's = it is  
its = belonging to it

If you can substitute this word with the phrase "it is," then you should use an apostrophe.

e.g. It's [it is] the most wonderful time of the year.

### Practice Exercise

Place an apostrophe and/or s where needed.

1. A ladys purse was found on the floor of the movie theatre.
2. Jess contribution was limited to two sentences that were included in the reports executive summary.
3. I find that ladies washrooms tend to be much cleaner than mens washrooms.
4. His wifes the director of a non-profit organization that has been advocating for seniors rights since the 80s.
5. The board hasnt yet decided when its next meeting will be.
6. Its nice to see you again!

### Answer Key

1. lady's 2. Jess's or Jess' ... report's 3. ladies' ... men's 4. wife's ... seniors' ... '80s. 5. hasn't 6. It's