

APOSTROPHE

USE THE APOSTROPHE TO SHOW ABBREVIATION (MISSING LETTERS)

USE THE APOSTROPHE TO SHOW POSSESSION (OWNERSHIP AND BELONGING)

NEVER USE AN APOSTROPHE TO SHOW PLURALS

POSSESSION = **ITS** OMISSION = **IT'S**

CORRECT

The cat's pyjamas / Dogs are cute / DVDs / Bananas / The '90s or the 1990s / pros and cons

The whole thing was Sarah's fault. Don't try to blame me.

It's about time this school lengthened **its** holidays.

TIME is possessive, so we write two **week's** holiday. An **hour's** detention.

INCORRECT

Half price DVD's / Fresh banana's for sale / The 1990's / the pro's and con's of stem cell research

These are plurals. They don't need apostrophes.

ADVANCED

SINGULAR NOUNS (even if they end in S)

PLURAL NOUNS not ending in S

PLURAL NOUNS ending in S

NAMES ENDING IN S:

(add **es** to pluralise 'S' names)

use **'s**

use **'s**

use **s'** add

's or'

The **cat's** purr / The boss's car.

The **men's** changing room.

An entire fleet of **cars'** brakes.

Charles's jacket. **Nicholas'** left arm.

The **Joneses'** new house.

NOTE: there are a few RARE cases where the plural apostrophe is becoming acceptable.

Most grammarians prefer Ps and Qs, but there are some who use p's and q's