

APOSTROPHE RULES

— Common Uses and Common Errors —

1



1) Joint or Separate?

Sara and Ali's office → one shared office

Sara's and Ali's desks → separate desks

2



2) Letters and Numbers

p's and q's



letters

1990s ✓

1990's ✗

two 5s ✓

two 5's ✗



Use apostrophes with some letters,
not for ordinary plurals or decades.

3



3) Easy Word Pairs

it's = it is / it has

its = belonging to it

who's = who is / who has

whose = belonging to whom

you're = you are

your = belonging to you

4



4) Family Names

The Smiths → family plural

The Smiths' house → family possession



Not: The Smith's



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APOSTROPHE RULES

— Possession and Contractions —



1 Contractions

Use an apostrophe for missing letters.

do not



don't

we are



we're

it is / it has



it's



2 Singular Possession

Add **'s** to a singular noun.

the girl's coat

the teacher's desk

the child's bicycle



3 Plural Possession

A. Plural ending in s

Add only **'**

- students' books
- players' bags

B. Irregular plural

Add **'s**

- children's toys
- women's clothing



4 Names Ending in S

Usually add **'s** to singular names.

- James's notebook
- Chris's charger



Family plural possession:
the Joneses' house



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