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32 A

UNDERSTANDING PUNCTUATION, MECHANICS, AND SPELLING

An **apostrophe** is a punctuation mark that is used in two situations: to form a contraction and to form the possessive of a noun or an indefinite pronoun.

A Apostrophes in Contractions

A **contraction** is a word that uses an apostrophe to combine two words. The apostrophe takes the place of omitted letters.

I didn't (*did not*) realize how late it was.

It's (*it is*) not right for cheaters to go unpunished.

Frequently Used Contractions

I + am = I'm	are + not = aren't
we + are = we're	can + not = can't
you + are = you're	do + not = don't
it + is = it's	will + not = won't
I + have = I've	should + not = shouldn't
I + will = I'll	let + us = let's
there + is = there's	that + is = that's
is + not = isn't	who + is = who's

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◆ PRACTICE 32-1

In the following sentences, add apostrophes to contractions if needed. If the sentence is correct, write *C* in the blank.

Example: ^{What's} ~~What~~ the deadliest creature on earth? _____

- (1) Bacteria and viruses, which we cant see without a microscope, kill many people every year. _____
- (2) When we speak about the deadliest creatures, however, usually were talking about creatures that cause illness or death from their poison, which is called venom. _____
- (3) After your bitten, stung, or stuck, how long does it take to die? _____
- (4) The fastest killer is a creature called the sea wasp, but it isn't a wasp at all. _____
- (5) The sea wasp is actually a fifteen-foot-long jellyfish, and although its not aggressive, it can be deadly. _____
- (6) People who've gone swimming off the coast of Australia have encountered this creature. _____
- (7) While jellyfish found off the Atlantic coast of the United States _____

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32 B

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Using Apostrophes

can sting, they aren't as dangerous as the sea wasp, whose venom is deadly enough to kill sixty adults. ____ (8) A person who's been stung by a sea wasp has anywhere from thirty seconds to four minutes to get help or die. ____ (9) Oddly, it's been found that something as thin as pantyhose worn over the skin will prevent these stings. ____ (10) Also, there's an antidote to the poison in the stings that can save the lives of victims. ____

■ WRITING FIRST: Flashback

Look back at your response to the Writing First activity on page 531, and underline any contractions. Have you used apostrophes correctly to replace the missing letters? Recopy all the contractions correctly on the lines below. Then, rewrite the contractions as two separate words.

Contractions	=	_____	+	_____
		Separate Words		
_____	=	_____	+	_____
_____	=	_____	+	_____
_____	=	_____	+	_____

B Apostrophes in Possessives

Possessive forms of nouns and pronouns show ownership. Nouns and indefinite pronouns do not have special possessive forms. Instead, they use apostrophes to indicate ownership.

Singular Nouns and Indefinite Pronouns

To form the possessive of singular nouns (including names) and indefinite pronouns, add an apostrophe plus an s.

Cesar Chavez's goal (the goal of Cesar Chavez) was justice for American farm workers.

The strike's outcome (the outcome of the strike) was uncertain.

Whether it would succeed was anyone's guess (the guess of anyone).

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UNDERSTANDING PUNCTUATION, MECHANICS, AND SPELLING

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FOCUS Singular Nouns Ending in -s

Even if a singular noun already ends in -s, add an apostrophe plus an s to form the possessive.

The class's next assignment was a research paper.

Dr. Ramos's patients are participating in a clinical trial.

Plural Nouns

Most plural nouns end in -s. To form the possessive of plural nouns ending in -s (including names), add just an apostrophe (not an apostrophe plus an s).

The two drugs' side effects (*the side effects of the two drugs*) were quite different.

The Johnsons' front door (*the front door of the Johnsons*) is red.

Some irregular noun plurals do not end in -s. If a plural noun does not end in -s, add an apostrophe plus an s to form the possessive.

The men's room is right next to the women's room.

◆ PRACTICE 32-2

Rewrite the following phrases, changing the noun or indefinite pronoun that follows *of* to the possessive form. Be sure to distinguish between singular and plural nouns.

Examples

the mayor of the city the city's mayor

the uniforms of the players the players' uniforms

1. the video of the singer _____
2. the scores of the students _____
3. the favorite band of everybody _____
4. the office of the boss _____
5. the union of the players _____
6. the specialty of the restaurant _____
7. the bedroom of the children _____
8. the high cost of the tickets _____

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Using
Apostrophes

- 9. the dreams of everyone _____
- 10. the owner of the dogs _____

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■ WRITING FIRST: Flashback

Look back at your response to the Writing First activity on page 531. Circle any possessive forms of nouns or indefinite pronouns. Have you used apostrophes correctly to form these possessives? If not, rewrite them correctly in the appropriate columns below.

<i>Singular Nouns</i>	<i>Indefinite Pronouns</i>	<i>Plural Nouns</i>

C Incorrect Use of Apostrophes

Be careful not to confuse a plural noun (*boys*) with the singular possessive form of the noun (*boy's*). Never use an apostrophe with a plural noun unless the noun is possessive.

Termites can be dangerous pests [not *pest's*].

The Velezes [not *Velez's*] live on Maple Drive, right next door to the Browns [not *Brown's*].

Also be careful not to use apostrophes with possessive pronouns that end in *-s*: *theirs* (not *their's*), *hers* (not *her's*), *its* (not *it's*), *ours* (not *our's*), and *yours* (not *your's*).

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FOCUS Possessive Pronouns

Be especially careful not to confuse possessive pronouns with sound-alike contractions. Possessive pronouns never include apostrophes.

<i>Possessive Pronoun</i>	<i>Contraction</i>
The dog bit <u>its</u> master.	<u>It's</u> (<i>it is</i>) time for breakfast.
The choice is <u>theirs</u> .	<u>There's</u> (<i>there is</i>) no place like home.
<u>Whose</u> house is this?	<u>Who's</u> (<i>who is</i>) on first?
Is this <u>your</u> house?	<u>You're</u> (<i>you are</i>) late again.

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32 C

UNDERSTANDING
PUNCTUATION, MECHANICS,
AND SPELLING

ON THE WEB

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◆ **PRACTICE 32-3**

Check the underlined words in the following sentences for correct use of apostrophes. If a correction needs to be made, cross out the word, and write the correct version above it. If the noun or pronoun is correct, write C above it.

Example: The ^Cpresident's views were presented after several other ~~speakers~~ first presented ~~theirs~~.

1. Parent's should realize that when it comes to disciplining children, the responsibility is there's.
2. It's also important that parents offer praise for a child's good behavior.
3. In it's first few week's of life, a dog is already developing a personality.
4. His and her's towels used to be popular with couple's, but it's not so common to see them today.
5. All the Ryan's spent four year's in college and then got good jobs.
6. From the radio came the lyrics "You're the one who's love I've been waiting for."
7. If you expect to miss any class's, you will have to make arrangements with someone who's willing to tell you you're assignment.
8. No other school's cheerleading squad ever tried as many tricky stunts as our's did.
9. Surprise test's are common in my economics teacher's class.
10. Jazz's influence on many mainstream musician's is one of the book's main subject's.

■ **WRITING FIRST: Flashback**

Look back at your response to the Writing First activity on page 531. Circle each plural noun. Then, circle each possessive pronoun that ends in *-s*. Have you incorrectly used an apostrophe with any of the circled words? If so, revise your work.