

The Apostrophe

There are two primary uses for the apostrophe:

- To indicate possession or ownership

Cait's dog (the dog of Cait)

Somebody's book (the book of somebody)

- To form contractions

Don't (do not)

I am (I'm)

Possession and Ownership:

Be sure to distinguish between singular possessives and plural possessives.

- Singular possessives use an apostrophe+ an s at the end of singular nouns:

the dog's bone

Leland's team

- When the singular noun ends in *-s*, then either a single apostrophe at the end of the word OR an apostrophe + s is acceptable:

James' fork

James

- Use an apostrophe + s at the end of plural nouns that do *not* end in *-s*.

the sheep's field

the children's boots

- Use an apostrophe at the end of plural nouns that end in *-s*.

the cats' litter box
the girls' party

Contractions:

Contractions are abbreviations of two or more words which omit letters. The apostrophe appears in place of the missing letters. While they do not commonly appear in formal writing, contractions can be used in informal writing or dialogue.

-do not becomes don't

-I am becomes I'm

-could not becomes couldn't