

Apostrophes

Use **apostrophes** to form contractions, to form certain plurals, or to show possession.

604.1 In Contractions

Use an apostrophe to form a contraction, showing that one or more letters have been left out of a word.

Common Contractions

can't (cannot)	couldn't (could not)	didn't (did not)
doesn't (does not)	don't (do not)	hasn't (has not)
haven't (have not)	isn't (is not)	I'll (I will)
I'd (I would)	I'm (I am)	I've (I have)
they'll (they will)	they'd (they would)	they've (they have)
they're (they are)	won't (will not)	wouldn't (would not)
you'll (you will)	you'd (you would)	you've (you have)
you're (you are)		

604.2 In Place of Omitted Letters or Numbers

Use an apostrophe to show that one or more digits have been left out of a number, or that one or more letters have been left out of a word to show a special pronunciation.

class of '99 (*19* is left out)

g'bye (the letters *ood* are left out of *good-bye*)

NOTE Letters and numbers should not be omitted in most writing assignments; however, they may be omitted in dialogue to make it sound like real people are talking.

604.3 To Form Some Plurals

Use an apostrophe and *s* to form the plural of a letter, a sign, ; or a word being discussed as a word.

A's + 's to's

Don't use too many *and 's* in your writing.

604.4 To Form Singular Possessives

To form the possessive of a singular noun, add an apostrophe and *s*.

the game's directions
Ross's bike

Dr. Mill's theory
Roz's hair

NOTE When a singular noun with more than one syllable ends with an *s* or *z* sound, the possessive may be formed by adding just an apostrophe.

Texas' oil (or) Texas's oil Carlos' mother (or) Carlos's mother

Apostrophes . . .

606.1 To Form Plural Possessives

The possessive form of plural nouns ending in *s* is usually made by adding just an apostrophe.

students' homework teachers' lounge

For plural nouns not ending in *s*, an apostrophe and *s* must be added.

children's book people's opinions

Remember: The word immediately before the apostrophe is the owner.

student's project (*student* is the owner)

students' project (*students* are the owners)

606.2 To Show Shared Possession

When possession is shared by more than one noun, add an apostrophe and *s* to the last noun in the series.

Uncle Reggie, Aunt Rosie, and my mom's garden
(All three own the garden.)

Uncle Reggie's, Aunt Rosie's, and my mom's gardens
(Each person owns a garden.)

606.3 To Form Possessives with Compound Nouns

The possessive of a compound noun is formed by placing the possessive ending after the last word.

her sister-in-law's hip-hop music (singular)

her sisters-in-law's tastes in music (plural)

the secretary of state's husband (singular)

the secretaries of state's husbands (plural)

606.4 To Form Possessives with Indefinite Pronouns

The possessive of an indefinite pronoun is formed by adding an apostrophe and *s*.

no one's anyone's somebody's

NOTE In pronouns that use *else*, add an apostrophe and *s* to the second word.

somebody else's anyone else's

606.5 To Express Time or Amount

Use an apostrophe with an adjective that is part of an expression indicating time (month, day, hour) or amount.

In today's Spanish class, we talked about going to Spain.

My father lost more than an hour's work when that thunderstorm knocked out our power.

I bought a couple dollars' worth of grapes at the roadside stand.