

Possessive Nouns

Possessive nouns show who or what owns or has (possesses) something. They answer the question "Whose?" They are formed by adding an apostrophe (') or an apostrophe s ('s) to nouns.

Here are the three basic rules for forming possessives:

Singular nouns:

Rule 1 - To change a singular noun to a possessive, add an apostrophe followed by an s ('s).

Examples:

the child's mother

Susie's kitten

the Jones's driveway

my boss's birthday

Sometimes, however, we need to make exceptions with singular nouns that end in s. For example, "Jones's" and "boss's" sound okay, but "Texas's" sounds too awkward.

If you form a possessive noun by adding 's to a singular noun ending in s, and the resulting word sounds too awkward, then take away the s and use the apostrophe by itself.

Examples: The Texas' population is growing. I enjoy Mrs. Cocos' class.

Now you try it. Change the following singular nouns to possessives:

1- cat => _____

2- airplane => _____

3- Jimmy => _____

4- Burger King => _____

5- Hercules => _____

Plural nouns:

Rule 2 - To change a plural noun **that ends in s** to a possessive, add an apostrophe by itself (').

Examples:

the apples' sweetness

the students' grades

the Smiths' family reunion

Rule 3 - To change a plural noun that **doesn't end in s** to a possessive, add an apostrophe followed by an s ('s).

Examples:

the children's school

the mice's tails

the deer's habitat

Now you try it. Change the following plural nouns to possessives:

1- cats => _____

2- airplanes => _____

3- geese => _____

4- Joneses => _____

5- leaves => _____

6- women => _____

Key:

Exercise 1:

1- cat => **cat's**

2- airplane => **airplane's**

3- Jimmy => **Jimmy's**

4- Burger King => **Burger King's**

5- Hercules => **Hercules'** (Hercules's sounds too awkward)

Exercise 2:

1- cats => **cats'**

2- airplanes => **airplane's**

3- geese => **geese's**

4- Joneses => **Joneses'**

5- leaves => **leaves'**

6- women => **women's**

TO REMEMBER:

Apostrophes are used to show ownership, not to change a singular noun to its plural form.

One cat fought two cats. = correct

One cat fought two cat's. = incorrect

The cat's ear was bleeding. = correct