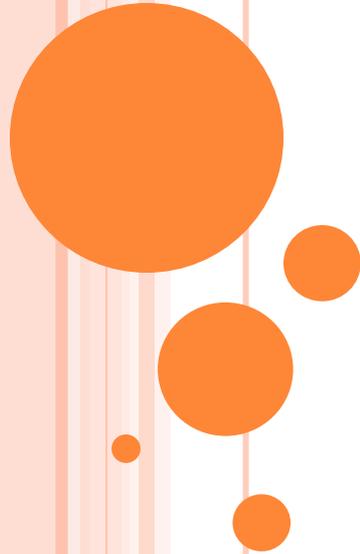


THE APOSTROPHE



USE OF THE APOSTROPHE

- The apostrophe has a few uses:

1. To show possession

Frodo's task was to deliver the ring to Mordor.

possession

2. To show omission of a letter(s)—a contraction

Frodo **couldn't** deliver the ring without help from Sam.

contraction



UNDERSTANDING POSSESSION

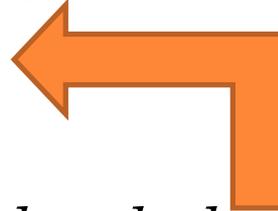
- Possession is used to show ownership or relationship before singular and plural nouns, especially when referring to people. There are different ways to show possession:
 - When the noun is singular, add an 's.
 - The woman's shoes
 - My neighbor's house
 - Frodo's cousin
 - Legolas's bow

(Note: For names that end in s, some writers add just the apostrophe: Legolas' bow. Either way is acceptable.)



UNDERSTANDING POSSESSIVES—PLURALS

- To form the possessive of a plural noun, pluralize the noun first and then add the apostrophe.
 - The wizards' beards
 - The elves' ships
 - The Baggins' hobbit hole
 - The children's books



(Note: with an irregular plural, the apostrophe will come before the s.)



POSSESSIVES

- To form the possessive of an inanimate object, it is better to use the “of phrase.”
 - The seat of the chair NOT the chair’s seat
 - The leaves of the tree NOT the tree’s leaves
- However, the apostrophe possessive may be acceptable with personifications and expressions of time.
 - The novel’s conclusion
 - His heart’s desire
 - A year’s salary



UNDERSTANDING CONTRACTIONS

- Contractions are used in generally informal contexts. The apostrophe is used to blend sounds and show omission of letters.

- I am taking English this semester.



- I'm taking English this semester.

- It is time to go on a journey.



- It's time to go on a journey.

- They are traveling from the Shire to Mount Doom.



- They're traveling from the Shire to Mount Doom.

*(Note: **It's** is a contraction for "it is"; the possessive of **it** = its (no apostrophe).*



MORE ON APOSTROPHE USAGE

- Like contractions, the apostrophe is used to show omission of digits as well.
 - Tolkien completed *The Lord of the Rings* in '48.
- In rare instances and to avoid confusion, an apostrophe is used to indicate the plural form of digits.
 - Did you dot all of your i's?
 - The word possessive has four s's.



COMMON MISUSE OF THE APOSTROPHE

- We generally do not use an apostrophe to pluralize numbers and acronyms.

Many of Tolkien's novels became popular in the 1960's.

Instead

Many of Tolkien's novels became popular in the 1960s.

The Writing Center has many new DLA's.

Instead

The Writing Center has many new DLAs.



LET'S PRACTICE!

- A key to understanding apostrophes is to remember the two rules: to show possession and to show omission.
- Complete the activities in the apostrophes and possessives DLA, and remember these two places for apostrophe usage.

