



## Possessives, Plurals, and Contractions

**Possessive case:** Words with -'s to indicate belonging.

- *Rob's cat.*
  - This indicates that the cat belongs to Rob; Rob possesses the cat.

**Contractions:** Words with an apostrophe to indicate the joining of two words when letters have been removed.

- *Rob's scooping the litter box.*
  - This could also say "Rob is scooping the litter box."
- *The cat can't wait to be fed.*
  - This could also say "The cat cannot wait to be fed."

**Plural:** Words with -s to indicate more than one.

- *Two cats.*
  - This means there is not one cat, but there are two (plural) cats.

### When to use possessives, possessive plurals, plurals, and contractions:

- Use the **plural** if you are mentioning more than one of something.
  - *The parks are nice.*
  - *The Millers are coming over.*
  - *How many Joneses are in the family?*
- Use the **possessive** if something belongs to a single someone or something else.
  - *Virginia's state parks are some of the nicest in the country.*
  - *The campus's fountains are some of its nicest features.*
- Use the **possessive** if something belongs to multiple people or things.
  - *All the parks' parking lots are being repaved.*
  - *The men's swim team won big last weekend.*
  - *The Joneses' dog is very aggressive.*
- Use the **possessive** when something belongs to a compound subject.
  - *Bennie's and Elton's families don't get along.*
  - *Sandy and Jack's computer science class is very challenging.*
- Use a **contraction** to join two words and eliminate some of their letters. Typically, this makes writing a bit less wordy but also a bit less formal.
  - *Y'all coming over?*
  - *It's nice outside.*

**Speaking and Writing Center [1]:** When dealing with a word that already ends in "s" like "Jones," add "es" to the end of the word to signify a plural.

**Speaking and Writing Center [2]:** An exception to this rule is with "it." When describing something that belongs to "it," you should use "its" without an apostrophe. This is because "it's" is used as a contraction to represent "it is."

**Speaking and Writing Center [3]:** Even if the word already ends in an "s" this rule still applies. As long as it's singular, add an apostrophe s to make it possessive.

**Speaking and Writing Center [4]:** If the plural form of the word ends in an "s" you should place the apostrophe after the "s" to make it possessive.

**Speaking and Writing Center [5]:** If the plural form of the word doesn't end in an "s" you should place the apostrophe before the "s" to make it possessive.

**Speaking and Writing Center [6]:** Even though this is an irregular plural form, because it still ends in "s" you can treat it like any other plural ending in "s" when making it possessive.

**Speaking and Writing Center [7]:** A compound subject is when two or more words together make up the subject of the sentence.

**Speaking and Writing Center [8]:** When two people own something separately (as in this case, where Bennie and Elton each have their own family), use an apostrophe s after each part of the subject.

**Speaking and Writing Center [9]:** If two people own something together (as in this case, where Sandy and Jack have the same computer science class), only use an apostrophe s after the second noun.

**Speaking and Writing Center [10]:** Note that contractions are usually considered informal, and many professors prefer that you avoid using them in formal writing.