



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.