

apostrophes

An **apostrophe** is a punctuation mark that looks like this ' . It has two main uses.

Showing missing letters

An apostrophe takes the place of the missing letter, or letters, when two words are shortened.

I'll

you've

he'd

she's

don't

Look at the handout called **Short forms** for a full list.

Showing ownership

An apostrophe plus **s** added to a noun shows ownership. It makes the noun **possessive**.

my mother's purse = the purse *belonging to* my mother.

Just because a word ends with an **s** does not mean that it needs an apostrophe.

Do not add apostrophes to plural nouns that end in **s unless** they are possessive.

x The cat's and dog's fight.

✓ The cats and dogs fight.

x The cats food and the dogs bones are in the kitchen.

✓ The cat's food and the dogs' bones are in the kitchen.

Remember...

These words do not have apostrophes even though they show who owns something:

his

hers

its

ours

theirs

yours