**Apostrophe Rules**

An **apostrophe** (’) is a punctuation mark that either shows ownership (Susan’s) or indicates that a letter has been intentionally left out to form a contraction (I’m, that’s, they’re).

1. Add –’s to a singular noun to show ownership even if the noun already ends in –s.
   1. Karen’s apartment is on the South Side.
   2. James’s roommate is looking for him.
2. If a noun is plural and ends in –s, just add an apostrophe. If it is plural but does not end in –s, add –’s.
   1. My books’ covers are falling off. [more than one book]
   2. The twins’ father was building them a playhouse. [more than one twin]
   3. The children’s toys were broken. [children is already plural]
   4. The men’s locker room is being painted. [men is already plural]
3. The placement of an apostrophe makes a difference in meaning.
   1. My sister’s six children are at my house for the weekend. [one sister who has six children] VERSUS My sisters’ six children are at my house for the weekend. [two or more sisters who together have six children]
4. Do not use an apostrophe to form the plural of a noun.
   1. Gina went camping with her sister’s and their children.
   2. All the highway’s to the airport are under construction.
5. Do not use an apostrophe with a possessive pronoun. These pronouns already show ownership (possession).
   1. Possessive pronouns: my, mine, your, yours, his, her, hers, its, our, ours, their, theirs, whose
      1. Is that bag yours?
      2. No, it’s ours.
   2. The single most common error with apostrophes and pronouns is confusing *its* (a possessive pronoun) with *it’s* (a contraction meaning “it is”). Whenever you write *it’s*, test correctness by replacing it with *it is* and reading the sentence aloud to hear if it makes sense.
6. A contraction is formed by joining two words and leaving out one or more of the letters. When writing a contraction, put an apostrophe where the letter or letters have been left out.
   1. She’s on her way. = She is on her way.
   2. I’ll see you there. = I will see you there.
7. Use -’s to make letters and numbers plural. The apostrophe prevents confusion or misreading.
   1. In Scrabble games, there are more e’s than any other letter.
   2. In women’s shoes, size 8’s are more common than size 10’s.
8. Use an apostrophe or -’s in certain expressions in which time nouns are treated as if they possess something.
   1. She took four weeks’ maternity leave after the baby was born.
   2. This year’s graduating class is huge.