



5 Possessive Adjectives and Possessive Pronouns



In Chapter 4, we have come across the forms of the personal pronouns that are known as *possessive adjectives* and *possessive pronouns*. In this Chapter, we shall take a closer look at them.



Possessive Adjectives

Let us begin by looking at some examples:

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| (a) I have put <u>my</u> old books in a box. | (e) Rita has tied <u>her</u> hair with a ribbon. |
| (b) We love <u>our</u> dog, Simba. | (f) The dog was licking <u>its</u> paw. |
| (c) Where are <u>your</u> new shoes? | (g) The children were playing with <u>their</u> toys. |
| (d) My father has lost <u>his</u> watch. | |

These words—*my, our, your, his, her, its, their*—are *possessive* forms of the personal pronouns *I, we, you, he, she, it, they*. They tell us about *possession*, that is certain persons have or own certain things, or that certain things belong to certain persons.

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| (a) <u>My</u> old books belong to <u>me</u> . |
| (b) <u>Our</u> dog belongs to <u>us</u> . |
| (c) <u>Your</u> new shoes belong to <u>you</u> . |
| (d) <u>His</u> watch belongs to <u>him</u> , that is, <u>my father</u> . |
| (e) <u>Her</u> hair belongs to <u>her</u> , that is, <u>Rita</u> . |
| (f) <u>Its</u> paw belongs to <u>it</u> , that is, <u>the dog</u> . |
| (g) <u>Their</u> toys belong to <u>them</u> , that is, <u>the children</u> . |

These words are, however, considered to be adjectives, because they tell us more about or qualify nouns, like *books, dog, shoes, watch, hair, paw, toys*, and so, do the work of adjectives. Moreover, they cannot be used on their own, that is, independently, *without nouns*.



You cannot say:

- (a) *I have put my ...*
- (b) *We love our ...*
- (c) *Where are your ...*
- (d) *My father has lost his ...*
- (e) *Rita has tied her ...*
- (f) *The dog was licking its ...*
- (g) *The children were playing with their ...*



In each case, a noun—*books, dog, shoes, watch, hair, paw, toys*—is needed to make the sense complete. They are, therefore, called **possessive adjectives** or **pronominal adjectives** (pronominal = formed from pronouns).



Possessive Pronouns

Now, look at these sentences:

- (h) *There are some old books in the box. They are mine.*
- (i) *Have you seen that red car? It is ours.*
- (j) *My shoes are new. So are yours.*
- (k) *There is a watch on the table. It is his.*
- (l) *This is a beautiful dress. Who does it belong to? It is hers.*
- (m) *There is a house on the top of the hill. Is it theirs?*



These words—*mine, ours, yours, his, hers, theirs*—are also possessive forms of the personal pronouns *I, we, you, he, she* and *they*, which tell us that certain persons have or own certain things, or that certain things belong to certain persons. But note that they do not depend on nouns. In each of the above sentences, the pronoun has been used without a noun and the sense is complete. These possessive forms are called **possessive pronouns**.

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| (h) <i>They are <u>mine</u>.</i> | (= belong to me) |
| (i) <i>It is <u>ours</u>.</i> | (= belongs to us) |
| (j) <i>So are <u>yours</u>.</i> | (= belong to you) |
| (k) <i>It is <u>his</u>.</i> | (= belongs to him) |
| (l) <i>It is <u>hers</u>.</i> | (= belongs to her) |
| (m) <i>It is <u>theirs</u>.</i> | (= belongs to them) |

The table given below will help you to distinguish between possessive pronouns and possessive or pronominal adjectives. Study it carefully so that you do not confuse one with the other.

Possessive Pronouns	Pronominal/Possessive Adjectives
mine	my
ours	our
thine	thy
yours	your
his	his
hers	her
theirs	their
	its

In Chapter 4, you have already been told that:

- *Thy* and *thine* are rarely used, and usually only in poems and prayers.
- The form *his* is used both as a possessive pronoun and a possessive or pronominal adjective:
 (n) *This book is his.* (possessive pronoun)
 (o) *This is his book.* (possessive adjective)
- The pronoun *it* has only one possessive form: *its* and it is used only as a possessive adjective:

We can say:

The dog wagged its tail.

But we cannot say:

The dog wagged the tail of its.

Note: Do not confuse *its* with *it's* — *it's* is a shortened form of *it is*. This is a very common error. If you want to say that something belongs to *it*, you should use *its* — the proper possessive form (without an apostrophe) of the pronoun *it*.



A simple rule that can help you to distinguish a possessive pronoun from a possessive adjective is that a possessive adjective is always used with a noun and comes before the noun it qualifies. Since a possessive pronoun does not depend on a noun, if it is used with a noun, it comes after the noun.

In the sentence—*He is my friend*—*my* is a possessive/pronominal adjective and comes before the noun *friend*.

In the sentence—*He is a friend of mine*—*mine* is a possessive pronoun and comes after the noun *friend*.

Given below are some more examples of the way possessive pronouns are used:

- (p) *This sister of mine lives in London.*
- (q) *He is no friend of yours—he is always speaking ill of you.*
- (r) *I have a book of his and I shall return it soon.*
- (s) *That photograph of hers was taken by her father.*
- (t) *An uncle of ours has written a book on physics.*
- (u) *The last play of theirs was a success and was highly praised.*

A State whether the **underlined words** are **possessive pronouns** or **possessive adjectives**:

1. Lakshman said that today is his birthday. When is yours?
2. This house is ours. Would you like to see my room?
3. Sita has finished her homework. She is helping me with mine.
4. Salim has forgotten to bring his English textbook. Rita has agreed to lend him hers.
5. Is your bicycle running smoothly? Its front wheel needs a little attention.
6. Where is her brother? Can he come with his camera to today's show?
7. His conduct has turned all friends of his into his enemies.
8. If you cannot find your notes, you can always ask Piku for his.
9. When will she have her dinner? I have had mine. We can be on our way as soon as they have finished theirs.
10. Every man loves his country. No other land can really be his.



B Point out the **nouns** the **underlined pronouns** or the **possessive adjectives** refer to. An example is given below to help you:

Brij said to Raj, 'I shall look at your paintings tomorrow.'

I = Brij; your = Raj's (poss. adj. qualifying = paintings)

1. Geetha told Radhika that she was looking very pretty. Radhika thanked her and asked her how she was.
2. Uncle Podger could not find his newspaper, because he was sitting on it.
3. Shakespeare wrote many plays. One of them is called *Hamlet*. It is a story of how Hamlet, the Prince of Denmark, avenges his father's murder.
4. 'How can you be so foolish as to think that I shall lend you money!' Shylock told Antonio.
5. Gopalan was driving his car when his mobile rang. He stopped the car and picked it up. It was his friend Venu, who said that he was coming to visit him that evening.
6. Bhaskaran told his brother, 'My friends and I are going to the theatre. Would you like to come with us and see the play?'
7. 'Do your duty and respect your elders,' his guru advised Harish.
8. 'I do not like this cousin of mine, Kumar. He always boasts of his money and all that he can do that I cannot,' Gaurav complained to me.
9. Of all his pupils, Drona liked Arjuna the best. He taught him all that he knew.
10. If a man could see himself as other men saw him, he would be surprised at what they saw.



C Fill in the blanks with **appropriate pronouns/words** chosen from those given within brackets:

1. Where is Mary? Has anybody seen ? (her/hers)
2. While going to school, Raja met a friend of (him/his)
3. Raja said, 'We invited him, but he never came to that party of' (ours/our)

4. This is a beautiful watch. Is it ? (your/yours)
5. That is a lovely dress you are wearing. Where did you buy from? (it/its)
6. I went to the zoo with some friends of (mine/my)
7. The dog was chasing own tail. (its/it's)
8. My mother listens to this song often. It is a favourite song of (her/hers)
9. Gopalan said, 'Our flat is smaller than' (their/theirs)
10. We know names, but they do not know (their/theirs; our/ours)



D Fill in the blanks with *appropriate pronouns or possessive adjectives*:

1. Sanjiv has been admitted to a college near house. no longer has to waste any time travelling. can simply walk to college.
2. Rita: How are , Susan? haven't seen you for a long time.
Susan: My brother got married. So, went to Delhi to attend wedding. have just come back to Kolkata.
3. It is good to have a pet. You can spend a lot of time looking after This will fill vacant hours with happiness and friendship. A pet, if treat it well, will become a good friend. will never betray
4. Pratap: I can't find notes. Has anybody seen anywhere?



Arka: notebook is on the table. left it there when you went out last night. have not looked at them yet.

Pratap: Thank shall lend to you tomorrow.

5. Kashmir is famous for beauty.
6. Peter doesn't like going to school. is always looking for some excuse to stay at home and play with model trains and toy soldiers. is, however, very good at studies and can do well with a little effort.
7. The little child was crying because had lost parents in the crowd at the market. An old man picked it up in arms and tried to stop from crying.

8. Mira walked into the shop, but there were so many toys in that she was confused. She could not make up mind. looked at the prices and got more confused. Finally, walked up to the counter and told the lady there what was looking for.



9. The pilgrims lost all belongings when a band of robbers attacked The robbers spared lives, but left penniless.
10. The Giant did not let anybody enter garden. So, when he saw the children playing in , was very angry.
11. I had taken great pains to prepare for the examination, but luck was not on side. fell ill and could not sit for it. shall have to sit for again.
12. The doctor examined Sanjay and found that had hurt back rather badly. advised to take absolute rest for a week.