

Possessive Pronoun

Definition of Possessive Pronoun

A possessive [pronoun](#) is used to show possession, or to point out the person who owns the [object](#). It replaces a noun within a [sentence](#). Possessive pronouns include:

my/mine
your/yours
his
hers
its
our/ours
their/theirs
whose

For instance, in the sentence, “We were both work–study kids with University jobs. Hers was in the library; mine was in the Commons cafeteria” (*Joyland*, by Stephen King), “hers” and “mine” are possessive pronouns.

Difference Between Possessive Pronoun and Contraction

Often possessive pronouns and contractions seem interchangeable, yet they perform very different functions. There are some contractions that look like possessive pronouns, but they are, in fact, different from the pronouns that look the same as the contractions.

These are confusing for many people, as – in these pairs – the contraction contains an apostrophe, but the possessive pronoun does not. Here are a few examples of commonly confused possessive pronouns and contractions:

Its/it's
The dog ran after its owner.

This sentence uses possessive pronoun “its.”

It's raining today.

Here “it's” is a contraction for “it is.”

Theirs/there's

There's only one day left.

In this sentence, “there's” is a contraction for “there is.”

The box is theirs.

This sentence has used possessive pronoun “theirs.”

Whose/who's

Who's making noise?

Here, “who's” is a contraction for “who is.”

Whose book is this?

In this sentence, “whose” is a possessive pronoun.

Your/you're

You're most welcome!

In this sentence, “you're” is a contraction for “you are.”

Your lunch is ready.

This sentence “your” is a possessive pronoun.

Common Use of Possessive Pronoun

I have lost my book, so Mary lent me hers.

This house is yours.

This dog is licking its bone.

Take it to her party.

This is my sister's phone; I'm sure it is hers.

Types of Possessive Pronoun

There are two types of possessive pronoun:

Absolute or Strong Possessive Pronoun

The absolute, or strong, possessive pronoun stands alone, does not modify a noun, and functions as a [subject](#). It is often referred as a possessive pronoun., though it is, in fact, an absolute pronoun. The basic absolute pronouns are: his, hers, mine, yours, theirs, its, and ours. For instance:

Our dog is well mannered, but theirs barks all time.

This suit is hers.

Mine is a jacket with front line buttons.

Is this car yours?

Weak Possessive Pronoun

Weak possessive is also known as possessive determiners that function as determiners and precede a noun. Weak possessive pronouns are his, her, my, your, its, our and their. For example:

My mobile is new.

This is his laptop.

Examples of Possessive Pronoun in Literature

Example #1: *Woman and the New Race* (by Margaret Sanger)

“Woman must have her freedom – the fundamental freedom of choosing whether or not she shall be a mother and how many children she will have. Regardless of what man’s attitude may be, that problem is hers – and before it can be his, it is hers alone.”

Sanger has used both absolute and weak possessive pronouns as underlined. The weak possessive pronoun is “his”, while absolute possessive pronoun is “hers.”

Example #2: *The Poison Sky* (by Helen Raynor)

“Go on, get inside the TARDIS. Oh, never given you a key? Keep that. Go on, that’s yours. Quite a big moment really!”

In this line, the absolute possessive pronoun “yours” replaces the noun

absolute pronoun.

Example #3: *The Catcher in the Rye* (by J.D. Salinger)

“It’s really hard to be roommates with people if your suitcases are much better than theirs.”

Here is another good use of absolute possessive pronoun “theirs”, represents a preceding noun, people. It does not modify the noun here.

Example #4: *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* (by Lewis Carroll)

“Mine is a long and sad tale!’ said the Mouse, turning to Alice, and sighing.

“It is a long tail, certainly’ said Alice, looking down with wonder at the Mouse’s tail; ‘but why do you call it sad?’”

The first line in the above instance shows the use of absolute possessive pronoun “mine,” which represents the following noun “Mouse.”

Function

Possessive pronouns help writers to avoid the repetitive use of nouns. Repetitive use of nouns makes a piece of prose trite, and hard to read. In fact, they show possession and ownership of something. In this way, they make the meanings of sentences clear. Also, they, sometimes, serve as subjects and objects of sentences, and refer to singular or plural antecedents.