

Punctuation – Apostrophe

Punctuation – The Apostrophe

The apostrophe (') is not the same as an open quotation mark (').

The apostrophe is used to show a contraction.

It is also used to show possession.

It's and its needs to be explained.

Apostrophe – Examples #1

The apostrophe is used to show a contraction.

- Are you sure you've got holiday next week? (you've = you have)
- Are you sure you're on holiday next week? (you're = you are)
- Yes, I'm on holiday next week. (I'm = I am)
- You'll have to work harder. (you'll = you will)

Apostrophe – Examples #2

The apostrophe is used to show possession.

There are many specific situations that need to be covered.

The simple traditional way was to add 's to show possession.

Unless the word ends in an s, then just add the apostrophe.

- That is Paul's comic.
- That is Thomas' comic.

Apostrophe – Examples #3

The modern way reflects the way in which we actually speak.

This only affects the words ending in the letter s.

The letter s after the apostrophe is spoken more like a letter z.

- That is Thomas's comic.
- The bus's passengers are happy.

Please refer to the lesson about possessive in the nouns section for more details.

For this lesson, it is enough to know that the apostrophe is used in all cases.

Apostrophe – it's and its

If an apostrophe shows a contraction and possession, then how do we interpret “it’s”?

It looks like it could be both.

In order to avoid confusion, we have an exception to the rule.

“It’s” means “it is” and “its” refers to the possessive, *by definition*.

➤ It’s a lovely day today.

(it’s = it is)

➤ The dog is enjoying its bone.

(its = possessive)