

4 Using apostrophes

We use an **apostrophe** to show **contraction** and **possession**.

- **Contraction** is when letters are missing.
she'd → she would, haven't → have not
- **Possession** is when someone owns something. To show **singular possession** (one owner), the **apostrophe** goes before the **s**. To show **plural possession** (more than one owner), the **apostrophe** goes after the **s**.

Salim's sticker, the dog's collar

The ants' nest (the nest belongs to many ants)

- An **s** does not need to be added if the plural already ends in an **s**, but it is added if the plural does not end in an **s**.

The books belonging to the men → the men's books.

- **Singular proper nouns** ending in an **s** use **'s**.

Wales's population



Activity 1

Write down whether each **apostrophe** is being used for **contraction (C)** or **possession (P)**. There may be more than one in a sentence.

- The dogs' kennel is getting too small for them. _____
- They shouldn't go out in this weather. _____
- I can't go to Mal's house today because I haven't done my homework. _____
- Dad's just gone out, so you'll have to wait until he returns. _____

Activity 2

Write down the sentence in each set that shows the correct use of the **apostrophe**.

- It's time for school.
Its time' for school.
Its' time for school.
- It's cant play outside today.
The boys' cant play outside today.
The boys can't play outside today.
- Tims new scooter' is broken.
Tim's new scooter is broken.
Tims' new scooter is broken.

Activity 3

Rewrite these sentences, changing the **contractions** into the full words.

- a) Roisin doesn't like apples.
- b) Joe and Josh said they'd meet us there.
- c) We haven't brought our umbrellas because we shouldn't need them.
- d) You won't be able to go to the swimming pool today because it's closed.

Activity 4

Rewrite these sentence and change the full words into **contractions**.

- a) However hard I try, I cannot do it.
- b) We will look after the baby.
- c) Tyrell could not go to school today but the doctor says he will be well enough tomorrow.
- d) I shall not go to the party!

Activity 5

Who or what do these things belong to? You will need to decide if the **possession** is **singular** or **plural**.

- a) Una's cats _____
- b) The rabbits' hutch _____
- c) The hotel's rooms _____
- d) Thomas's football _____



Investigate!

Find examples of where **apostrophes** have been used in books, magazines and newspapers. Decide whether they have been used for **contraction** or **possession**.