

NARRATOR: Apostrophes.

Apostrophes are punctuation used to indicate contractions and to show possession. They are also used to make a numbers and letters plural and to indicate certain expressions of time and measure.

Contractions are shortened versions of groups of words. In a contraction, apostrophes are used in place of the letters that have been removed. Let's look at a few examples of common contractions.

I am hungry. I'm hungry.

Julie cannot attend the party. Julie can't attend the party.

The line was not too long. The line wasn't too long.

Contractions are common in speech and in informal writing such as email and informal notes. It is generally best to avoid contractions in formal writing such as school essays.

When the United States was founded, its leaders did not intend to follow the model set forth by other countries.

Apostrophes are used along with the letter S to indicate possession or ownership.

The girl's toothbrush. The toothbrush belongs to the girl.

Elliott's house. The house belongs to Elliott.

When a singular noun ends in the letter S, it usually takes an 's to indicate possession. In the sentence "The class's ceremony lasted three hours," "The class's ceremony" means the ceremony of the class.

When a plural noun ends in S, however, it takes an apostrophe only to indicate possession. In the sentence "My parents' vacation was cut short by heavy rain," "my

parents' vacation" means the vacation of my parents.

For singular and plural nouns, showing possession requires at least an apostrophe. But there is an exception. The pronoun "its" does not use an apostrophe to show possession.

The dog ate its dinner.

Even though there is no apostrophe, the pronoun "its" means that the dinner belonged to the dog.

When an apostrophe is used with "it's," it indicates the contraction it is.

It's raining.

There is an apostrophe here, so "it's" means it is.

Use an apostrophe to make a year or a letter plural.

My grandparents were born in the 1940's.

Zekia got straight A's last semester.

Use an apostrophe with certain expressions of time and measure.

The story of the arrest is yesterday's news.

Skyler bought a yard's worth of fabric.

Be careful not to use apostrophes to make ordinary words and proper nouns plural.

Caroline collects seashell's when she goes to the beach.

The apostrophe in "seashell's" isn't needed because the word is plural, not possessive.

The Vallecillo's are having a party at their house on Saturday night.

The apostrophe in "Vallecillo's" isn't needed because the word is plural, not

possessive.

Remember, understanding the rules for apostrophes will help you write clearly and correctly.