

## Apostrophes

The apostrophe is used to show ownership or to indicate a contraction. For possession, the apostrophe comes before or after the final “s” depending upon whether the word is singular or plural. (Note: If the spelling of the word itself is plural without adding an “s”, then the apostrophe is placed before the “s”.) Study these examples:

one boy’s book	one man’s book	one woman’s book
one boy’s books	one man’s books	one woman’s books
two boys’ books	two men’s books	two women’s books
one child’s book	two children’s books	two girls’ books
one week’s wages	two weeks’ wages	four cents’ worth
Mr. Smith’s dog	the Smiths’ dog	James’s or James’ dog

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For contractions, the apostrophe is placed at the spot where the letters have been left out. Study these examples:

She’d like to go. (she would)	It’s cold today. (it is)	We’re ready. (we are)	He didn’t pass. (did not)
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The following words are often confused: Study them carefully:

Whose: Whose house is that?	Their: Their house is nice.
Who’s: Who’s at the door? (who is)	There: There is one piece left.
Your: Your house is lovely.	There’s: There’s one piece left. (there is)
You’re: You’re funny. (you are)	Theirs: That one is theirs.
Its: The dog broke its leg.	They’re: They’re too heavy. (they are)
It’s: It’s a hard test. (it is)	

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Directions: Choose the correct words.

1. I (shouldn’t, should’nt) have waited until the last minute to study.
2. The (Bakers, Baker’s, Bakers’) are our new neighbors.
3. The (Bakers, Baker’s, Bakers’) car is very powerful.
4. Mr. (Bakers, Baker’s, Bakers’) job is quite stressful.
5. (It’s, Its) a difficult test, but the (students, students’) did well.
6. My math (teachers, teacher’s, teachers’) tests are too tricky.
7. The (teachers, teacher’s, teachers’) at this school are open-minded.
8. I know (there, they’re, their) trying hard. Why (aren’t, are’nt) they passing (there, they’re, their) classes? (Whose, Who’s) fault is it?
9. The (childrens, children’s, childrens’) toys are broken.
10. (Its, It’s) roof caved in. (There’s, Theirs) no excuse for that.

## Quotation Marks

The most common use of quotation marks is to indicate the exact words of a speaker. Notice how the following sentences are punctuated:

Jim remarked, "This is a great film."  
"This is a great film," Jim said.

"Stop!" shouted the officer.  
The officer shouted, "Stop!"

Jim asked, "What time is it?"  
"What time is it?" Jim asked.

"If you come over later," Jerry said, "we  
can talk about it."

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Indirect quotations rephrase a statement; therefore, they do not need quotation marks because they are not using the exact words of the speaker.

Joe told us that he wanted to be left alone for the rest of the day.  
He asked if I would pick up this prescription after work.

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Quotation marks are also used to indicate the titles of poems, short stories, songs, and articles, and to highlight words.

"Bad to the Bone" is a great song by George Thorogood.  
I read Robert Frost's "Patterns" yesterday.  
The word "receive" is a difficult one for many people to spell.

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Single quotation marks are used for a quotation within a quotation.

"The song 'Help' is a classic," said Sarah.

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Directions: Punctuate the following sentences (capitalization is correct):

1. Which of you Mildred asked is going to the store with me
2. I said that I would go if we could be back by six
3. I said I'll go if we can be back by six
4. Are you trying to confuse me asked the student or help me
5. He told me he had to learn The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere
6. No one believes he will give a pop quiz the day after a holiday said Martin I'm going to be prepared just in case
7. She wondered how well she had done on the test
8. She wondered Did I do well on that test
9. Comma Usage is the most difficult chapter in the book said Tom
10. Janice exclaimed Shut up and sit down Don't move until I return
11. No one understands me complained the new boss so I guess I'm doing something wrong Can you help me out What should I do