

# 3 Apostrophes

## 1. TO SHOW POSSESSION

Apostrophes show possession (see Card 18).

- If the word to show possession does not end in *s*, add an apostrophe *s*: a woman's choice, children's toys.
  - If the word to show possession ends in *s*, add only an apostrophe: Doris' job, the employees' demands.
- Do not use apostrophes to show possession for pronouns: his book, it is theirs, the pencil is yours.

## 2. TO SHOW OMISSION

Apostrophes show that letters are left out of words: can't (for cannot), it's (for it is or it has), '80 (for 1980), she's (for she is or she has).

**Hint:** Be sure to place the apostrophe at the point where you left out the letters: haven't (have not), didn't (did not). The apostrophe goes where the "o" would have been.

## 3. TO FORM THE PLURAL

The apostrophe is also used to form the plural of

- numbers: 6's and 7's
- letters: t's and v's
- symbols: + 's and -'s
- words referred to as words: and's, but's, or's

**Hint:** Do not use apostrophes to show any other plurals.

**Wrong:** We sell banana's and apple's. **Right:** We sell bananas and apples.

## EXERCISES

**A.** In order to complete the following sentences correctly, you need to add apostrophes to some of the words in parentheses. Write the word or words correctly in the space provided in front of each sentence. If a word is correct, place a capital C on the line.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. (Its) too late to go to the movies.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Anyone with a pair of (5s) wins the card game.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. She (isnt) ready for marriage.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. This sweater is (yours) and not (Roberts).
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. She never remembered to cross her (ts) or dot her (is).
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. (Hes) not sure of the correct answer.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. The (ands), (buts), (ors), and other short words are not capitalized in titles.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. My (fathers) (tools) are very expensive.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. I (cant) believe that you (havent) seen the painting *The Spirit of (76)*.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. The (boys) bicycles were destroyed in the garage fire.

**B.** Each of the following paragraphs contains five words that require apostrophes. As you locate these errors circle them; then write the correct forms of the words in the spaces below each paragraph.

(1) The Johnsons children are always getting into trouble, but its not always their fault. Since they didnt go to camp last summer, they decided to collect old newspapers. However, the boys enthusiasm led them astray. They followed the newsboys as they delivered their daily papers and then the boys collected their neighbors papers before they had a chance to read them.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

(2) When the price of gasoline was higher at Phyllis station than Jakes, we didnt go to either of them. We walked. That was back in 79 when we thought the 99s on all the pumps were outrageous.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_