

Possessive Nouns: How It Works

A possessive noun shows that something belongs to someone or something.

1. A possessive noun shows who owns it

the dog's bone

The bone belongs to the dog.

2. One owner: add 's

Pam's kite

the fox's den

One owner, so add an apostrophe and s.

3. Plural ending in s: add only an apostrophe

the two dogs' bones

The bones belong to two dogs.

4. Plurals that do not end in s: add 's

the children's books

the men's hats

Where does the apostrophe go?

1

Who is the owner?

Write the owner first.

2

One, or more than one?

One owner: add 's.

3

Does it end in s already?

A plural that ends in s takes only an apostrophe.

Plural or possessive?

dogs means more than one dog. No apostrophe.

The dogs ran.

dog's means it belongs to one dog.

The dog's bowl is empty.

dogs' means it belongs to more than one dog.

The dogs' bowls are empty.

Watch out

its shows ownership and has **no** apostrophe:

The cat licked its paw.

it's is short for **it is**:

It's a sunny day.