

11. POSSESSIVES

Can you think of a shorter way to write the following phrases? Use the spaces provided to the right of each phrase:

1. the cry of the loon _____
2. the basketball that belongs to the girls _____
3. the novels of Jane Austen _____

If you rewrote the above phrases in the possessive form, here is how they would look:

1. the loon's cry
2. the girls' basketball
3. Jane Austen's novels

Definition

The **possessive** form of a noun shows possession, ownership, or connection. In the above phrases, for instance, the cry is a noise the loon makes, the basketball belongs to the girls, and the novels were written by Jane Austen.

If you can make an *of* phrase with a noun, you can also use that noun in its possessive form:

1. the president's mistake (the mistake of the president)
2. the women's club (the club of the women)
3. the conductor's baton (the baton of the conductor)

FORMING THE POSSESSIVE

To form the possessive of singular nouns, add 's to these nouns:

dog/dog's Simon/Simon's table/table's

For singular nouns that end in *s*, it is also correct to form the possessive by adding the apostrophe only:

Charles's or Charles' Brandeis's or Brandeis'
Jesus's or Jesus' Dickens's or Dickens'

However, you will *always* be right if you add 's to the singular form of a noun.

To form the possessive of plural nouns that end in *s*, just add an apostrophe to these nouns:

teachers' cities' writers'

To form the possessive of plural nouns that do *not* end in *s*, add an 's to these nouns:

men's sheep's children's

HINT Before deciding whether to add an apostrophe or an 's to a plural noun, first make sure that you have formed the plural of that noun correctly. As you learned in the lesson on nouns, you will need to change some letters when forming the plurals of certain nouns. When forming the possessive plural of a noun, therefore, first change the noun into its plural form and then make the noun possessive:

<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>	<i>Possessive Plural</i>
boat	boats	boats'
box	boxes	boxes'
thief	thieves	thieves'
baby	babies	babies'
ox	oxen	oxen's
man	men	men's
deer	deer	deer's

POSSESSIVE EXERCISES

A. *Directions:* Change the italicized words into the possessive form of the noun and then rewrite the phrase in the space provided.

EXAMPLE: the ears of *the dog* the dog's ears

1. roar of *the ocean* _____
2. poems of *John Keats* _____
3. call of *the swan* _____
4. speeches of *the politician* _____
5. music of *Bach* _____
6. whisper of *the wind* _____
7. beauty of *the forest* _____
8. life of *Charles* _____
9. cold of *winter* _____
10. hair of *the woman* _____

B. *Directions:* Fill in the blank in each sentence with the plural possessive form of the noun that appears below the line.

EXAMPLE: He had five days' rest at home.
day

1. My grandmother belonged to a _____ sewing circle.
lady
2. The chorus conductor was pleased with the _____ voices.
man
3. The _____ honks woke Matilda from a sound sleep.
goose
4. The _____ toys lay scattered around the room.
child
5. All three _____ airports need to be repaired.
city
6. The _____ wool is turned into beautiful, warm sweaters.
sheep
7. The _____ house is really a mansion.
Jones
8. He looked through the glass window at the _____ faces.
baby
9. _____ robes are almost always black.
Judge
10. The _____ howls sent a tingle up Jennifer's spine.
wolf

C. *Directions:* Insert apostrophes in the correct places in the following sentences.

EXAMPLE: I love Jimmy's new bicycle.

1. The two mens shirts were soaked through after the rain.
2. Jane loved all of E.B. Whites books.
3. The farmers market has the best fruit and vegetables in town.
4. I wish I didn't have to go to my uncles house.
5. Which of the Beatles CDs do you own?
6. All three of the doctors bills were high.
7. The shelves contents were soon emptied by the thieves.
8. My cars engine fell out at the start of my journey.
9. We passed through the hurricanes eye at 4:00.
10. The musicians instruments disappeared after their concert.

D. *Directions:* Change the italicized words into the possessive form of the noun and then rewrite the phrase in the space provided.

EXAMPLE: core of the apple _____ *the apple's core* _____

1. spots of the ponies _____
2. death of the soldier _____
3. intelligence of the women _____
4. den of the foxes _____
5. hands of the clock _____
6. speed of the cheetah _____
7. depth of the ocean _____
8. mark of Cain _____
9. grace of the eagles _____
10. poems of Robert Burns _____
11. children of the McCrumpets _____
12. bells of the cathedrals _____
13. anger of the mob _____
14. laughter of the girls _____
15. tears of the crocodile _____