



Possessive Forms of Nouns

We use the possessive form of nouns to say that someone has something or that something belongs to someone. There are two ways to show possession in English - 'apostrophe + s' and 'of'.

We usually use 'apostrophe + s' (*mum's*) or 's + apostrophe' (*sisters'*) with people and animals and the things that they own and their relationships. It's much less normal to use 'of' here.

- My mum's laptop. (NOT: ~~The laptop of my mum.~~)
- My sister's rabbit. (NOT: ~~The rabbit of my sister.~~)

When the thing doesn't belong to a person or animal, we are more likely to use 'of'.

- **The pages of** the book.
- **The door of** the house.

With countries, cities and other places, we can usually choose. It is more normal to use 'apostrophe + s'. 'Of' tends to sound more formal.

- She loves wandering through **London's streets**.

or

- She loves wandering through **the streets of London**.



Singular nouns

We generally use 'apostrophe + s' with people and animals.

- **John's book**
- The **teacher's car**
- The **child's jumper**
- The **dog's bed**

Plural nouns that end with -s

We add 's + apostrophe' to plural nouns that end with -s already.

- **students' books**
- **parents' house**
- **teachers' room**

Plural nouns that don't end with -s

With plural nouns that don't already end in -s, we add 'apostrophe + s.'

- **children's toys**
- **men's clothes**
- **women's rights**
- **people's opinions**

Possessives with names

If the noun is a name or a surname and it already ends with an -s, we normally add 'apostrophe + s', although some people just add an apostrophe after the 's'.

- **Jess's** sister is lovely. OR **Jess'** sister is lovely.
- **James's** friends are older than him. OR **James'** friends are older than him.
- **The Jones's** dog is so friendly. OR **The Jones'** dog is so friendly.



Possessives with two people

We can add 'apostrophe + s' to the second person when you say two names and the thing belongs to both people.

- I've just been to **John and Julie's** new house (= there is one house, and John and Julie live in it together).
- **Mum and dad's** neighbour is always in the garden (= there is one neighbour).

If there are two separate things that belong to two separate people, you can put 'apostrophe + s' on both names.

- **Sarah's and Lucy's** houses both have big gardens (= there are two houses and both of them have a big garden. Sarah and Lucy don't live together).
- **Mum's and dad's** cars are parked outside (= there are two cars – mum's car and dad's car).

Two possessive nouns together

We can sometimes use two possessive forms together. For example:

- My **husband's friend's car** (= the car of the friend of my husband).
- My **sister's colleague's house** (= the house of the colleague of my sister).

Possessives with nouns for time

Sometimes we can use 'time word + apostrophe + s' when the time of the noun is relevant.

- **Today's meeting** has been cancelled.
- **Last week's results** were better than expected.
- Did you read **yesterday's newspaper**?



Possessives without the noun

We can often leave out the noun after the possessive if the meaning is clear without it.

We usually prefer to drop the noun instead of repeating it.

- That jacket is my friend's ~~jacket~~. = That jacket is my **friend's** (more elegant than 'that jacket is my friend's jacket').
- Those glasses are William's ~~glasses~~. = Those glasses are **William's** (more elegant than 'those glasses are William's glasses').

Possessives to talk about familiar places or people's houses

In informal English, we can use 'apostrophe + s' with some familiar places and people to mean that person's house, or business.

We don't need to use the word 'house' or similar words.

- We're going over to **John's** later (= to John's house).
- I have an appointment at **the doctor's** (= at the doctor's surgery).
- I bought some bread from **the butcher's** (= from the butcher's shop).

In the same way, we can use possessive pronouns, like 'yours', 'ours' or 'theirs' to mean 'your house', 'their flat' and so on.

- Let's eat at **mine**.
- Shall we go to **yours** tomorrow night?