

Boost Free Lessons - Year 9 English

Lesson 5: Apostrophes

Name: _____ Grade: _____ Date: _____

Worked Example 1

Explain the difference between the two sentences.

The student's essays were collected.

The students' essays were collected.

1. An apostrophe before the **s** shows one owner.
2. In the first sentence there is one student, who wrote more than one essay.
3. An apostrophe after the **s** shows more than one owner.
4. In the second there are several students. The apostrophe position changes the meaning entirely.

The first has one student, the second has several.

Worked Example 2

Correct the apostrophe errors below.

Its been raining since Monday, and the dog has lost it's collar.

1. *It's* is short for *it is* or *it has*. The apostrophe replaces the missing letters.
2. *Its* without an apostrophe means belonging to it, like *his* or *hers*.
3. The first is short for *it has been*, so it needs an apostrophe.
4. The second means the collar belonging to the dog, so it must not have one.

It's been raining since Monday, and the dog has lost its collar.

Remember: Apostrophes show **possession** or a **contraction**, never a plural. Before the **s** means one owner; after the **s** means several. **Its** is possessive; **it's** means it is.



Question 1: Correct the apostrophe error in each sentence.

1. The girls bag was left behind.

2. Its too late to change now.

3. The three teachers offices are upstairs.

4. The cat licked it's paw.

5. Who's turn is it?

6. The childrens playground is closed.

7. Thats not what I meant.

8. The two dogs owner arrived late.



Question 2: Read the passage below, then answer the questions.

Its been a difficult year for the club's committee. The members complaint was heard in March, and its outcome has still not been announced.

1. Find one apostrophe error in the passage and correct it.

2. Find a second error and correct it.

3. Find one apostrophe that is used correctly.

4. Explain the rule for a plural noun that already ends in **s**.

5. Rewrite the corrected passage in full.



Question 3: Answer the following questions.

1. Write a sentence using an apostrophe to show one owner.

2. Write a sentence using an apostrophe to show several owners.

3. Explain the difference between **its** and **it's**.

4. Why is *the 1990's* incorrect for a decade?





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Answers and Model Responses: Apostrophes**Question 1**

1. girl's
2. It's
3. teachers'
4. its
5. Whose
6. children's
7. That's
8. dogs'

Question 2

1. *Its been* should be *It's been*.
2. *the members complaint* should be *the members' complaint* (or *member's* for one member).
3. Model: *club's* in *the club's committee*.
4. Add the apostrophe after the existing s, with no extra s: *the players' change room*.
5. It's been a difficult year for the club's committee. The members' complaint was heard in March, and its outcome has still not been announced.

Question 3

1. Model response: My sister's car would not start.
2. Model response: The students' results were posted online.
3. *It's* is short for *it is* or *it has*. *Its* shows possession, like *his* or *hers*, and never takes an apostrophe.
4. The apostrophe would suggest possession or a contraction, but a decade is simply a plural. It should be written *the 1990s*.

