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A possessive noun is a [noun](#) that names who or what owns or has possession of something. To show possession, we usually add an apostrophe 's to the noun.



via <https://www.test-english.com/grammar-points/b2/compound-nouns-possessive-forms/>

## Possessive 's - with people

### Singular nouns

1. We can use 's to describe relationships between people or people and objects.

- This is **Martin's** camera. (~~NOT: This is the camera of Martin.~~)
- We spent the day at my **sister's** house.
- These are my **boyfriend's** socks.
- Mr **Lewis's** house is for sale.

2. Even if the singular noun is a [proper](#) noun (i.e. a name), we add 's.

- Tony is **Ann's** (=her) husband. (~~NOT: Tony is the husband of Ann.~~)
- Ann is **Tony's** (=his) wife.
- Ann is **Mark's** (=his) mother.
- Tony is **Mark's** (=his) father.

3. If a name ends in '-s', you can either add an apostrophe + s, or just an apostrophe. The first option is more common.

- This is **Charles's** car (or **Charles'** car).

## Plural nouns







1. When a plural noun ends in '-s' we write the apostrophe after the 's':

- The two **sisters'** house is next to mine. (= the house of the two sisters)
- The **plumbers'** tools were rusty. (= the tools of the plumbers)
- Mark's **sisters'** names are Ann and Julia. (NOT: ~~Mark's sister's names are...~~)
- ('Mark' is singular but 'sisters' is plural.)
- Mark's **parents'** names are Ann and Tony.

2. If a plural noun doesn't end in 's' (irregular), use 's as normal:

- Ann is the **children's** mother.
- This shop only sells **women's** clothes.

Let's summarize how to form possessive form of singular and plural nouns:

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>singular nouns:</b> add -'s</p> <p>example: boy → boy's</p>                         | <p>The <b>boy's</b> <u>bicycle</u> is blue.</p>  <p>It belongs to the boy.</p>              |
| <p><b>plural nouns:</b> add -s'</p> <p>example: boys → boys'</p>                          | <p>The <b>boys'</b> <u>bicycles</u> are blue.</p>  <p>They belong to the boys.</p>          |
| <p><b>some irregular plural nouns:</b> add -'s</p> <p>example: children → children's</p>  | <p>The <b>children's</b> <u>bicycles</u> are blue.</p>  <p>They belong to the children.</p> |

## Possessive nouns as part of a phrase

1. Sometimes more than one word/noun are used to show possession. Here, we add 's to the word which is closest to the noun:

- The **King of Sparta's** wife was called Helen.
- I accidentally took **someone else's** phone by mistake.
- The **President of USA's** speech was very long.

2. If an object belongs to two people (joint possession), we just use one "s" and add it to the possessive closest to the noun:

- Mark is **Ann and Tony's** (=their) son. (NOT: ~~Mark is Ann's and Tony's son.~~)
- Ann and Tony are **Sarah and Julia's** parents. (NOT: ~~Ann and Tony are Sarah's and Julia's parents.~~)

3. BUT: If there is a separate possession of the same noun, we use the possessive form ('s) for each word:

- **Liza's** and **Kate's** books are full of useful information. (Liza and Kate have their books)

## Possessive 's - with animals

Like with people, we add an apostrophe + s after nouns denoting animals:

- This is the **dog's** food.
- One of the **cat's** feet is black.

## Using 'of' with objects

To describe possession with things, ideas and places, we usually use 'of':

- The windows **of that house** are dirty. (NOT: ~~That house's windows are dirty.~~)
- What is the name **of this village**? (NOT: ~~What is this village's name?~~)
- We didn't see the first part **of the movie**. (NOT: ~~We didn't see this movie's first part.~~)

## Compound nouns

With compound or hyphenated nouns, we use the possessive form ('s) for the word closest to the noun.

- My **mother-in-law's** gift is a diamond ring.

- The **English teacher's** method is very effective.

Here's a good video from Adam Lloyd explaining how to form possessive nouns:

See also:

[Possession: Adjectives, Pronouns, Apostrophe + s](#)

[Possessive Pronouns](#)