



# What Are Possessive Nouns?



Possessive nouns are used to show ownership or connection between things or people.

① They show ownership or *possession* of something.

“This is **Benjamin’s** jacket. He left it at my house on Saturday.”

\*The jacket belongs to Benjamin. He is the owner of the jacket.

“The **cat’s** toys are all over the living room.”

\*The toys belong to the cat.

“The **boss’** office.”

\*The office belongs to my boss.

② They show a connection between 2 things or people.

“I saw **Benjamin’s** brother this morning at the coffee shop beside my school.”

\*The person I saw at the coffee shop is connected to Benjamin, he is his brother.

“The **bicycle’s** tire is flat. It needs air.”

\*The tire is connected to the bicycle. It is part of the bicycle.

“**Lucas’** boss is always in a bad mood on Monday.”

\*The boss is connected to Lucas, it is the person he works for.

The adjective **possessive** and the noun **possession** both come from the verb **possess**.

POSSESS means to have or own something

[possess verb - OxfordLearnersDictionaries.com](https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com)

## How to make Possessive Nouns

Possessive nouns are formed by adding an apostrophe (') and the letter "s" to the noun -

“This is Benjamin’s jacket.”

For nouns ending in S we only need to add an apostrophe (') -

NAMES: “Dennis’ cousin came to the party.”

TITLES: “I don’t like the boss’ working style.”

If the noun is plural and ends in an "s," follow the same rule.

“The students’ second-semester textbooks have just arrived.”

\*NOTE - If a plural noun doesn’t end in S we need to add ‘S’ to make it possessive.

The children’s towels are hanging on the clothesline.

## Is the Possessive form of Chris - Chris’ or Chris’s?

Actually, both are okay. From my research, it seems that adding an apostrophe (') S to proper names that end in S is common in the U.K. (Chris’s)

I’m Canadian, but I understand why they write it this way. I was taught to write Chris’, but when I say the word it makes an extra sound. \*It’s not even an S sound! It sounds like CHRIS-IZ. (The extra ‘S makes an IZ sound)

“Chris’ [CHRIS-IZ] cousin came to the party.”

The apostrophe S (’s) used in the U.K. represents that extra sound. Follow the spelling set by your teacher but remember that both spellings sound the same.

“Chris’s [CHRIS-IZ] cousin came to the party.”



If you have listened to much English you will hear this Z sound is used a lot. English words that end in ES make an IZ sound.

Benches - BENCH-IZ

Peaches - PEACH-IZ

Watches - WATCH-IZ

## When to use possessive pronouns

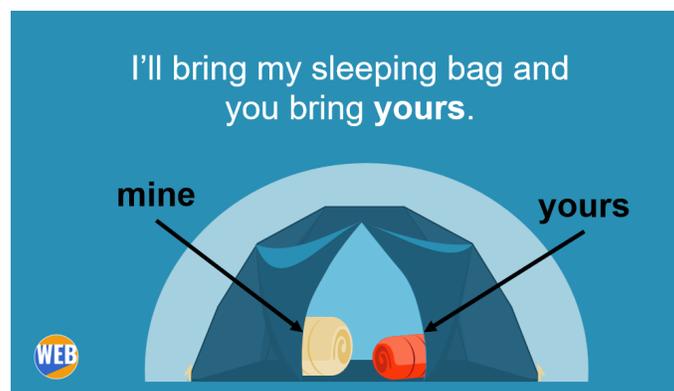
Possessive pronouns are "mine", "yours", "his", "hers", "ours", "theirs", and "its."

\*Technically ITS is a possessive adjective, not a possessive pronoun. This means that we cannot use ITS alone, it must be used with a noun. (More on possessive adjectives in the MY and MINE section.)

Possessive pronouns do not require an apostrophe; they replace possessive nouns to avoid repetition.

For example, it's natural to say "I'll bring my sleeping bag and you bring **yours**."

The sentence "I'll bring my sleeping bag and you bring your sleeping bag." is fine but we avoid repetition as much as possible in conversation. (I bet your first language does the same thing!) **Yours** is a replacement for **your sleeping bag**.



Possessive pronouns do not need an apostrophe

<b>Mine</b> (Shows something belongs to the speaker)
<b>Yours</b> (Shows something belongs to the listener)
<b>His</b> (Shows something belongs to a male)
<b>Hers</b> (Shows something belongs to a female)
<b>Its</b> (Shows something belongs to an animal or thing)
<b>Ours</b> (Shows something belongs to a group including the speaker)
<b>Theirs</b> (Shows something belongs to a group not including the speaker)

## Possessive noun example sentences

- The **boss's** office was on the top floor.
- I found **Erin's** purse on the counter.
- This watch used to be my **grandfather's**. He gave it to my dad.
- The **teacher's** desk was cluttered with papers.
- This is Lily. She is **John's sister's** friend.
- The **car's** engine was making a strange noise.
- **Kailey's** hat was on the hook.
- The **president's** speech was over 90 minutes long.
- The **school's** dress code is very strict.
- The **children's** toys were in the playroom.
- The **karate master's** dying wish was that his son continues running his school.
- The **movie's** marketing budget was over 5 million dollars.
- The book is a collection of photos of the **area's** most beautiful beaches.
- These are **Patrick's** shoes, I think he needs a new pair.

## Possessive pronoun example sentences

- You can write in any notebook from the top shelf, but not the red one. That notebook is **mine**.
- Can I borrow your pen? **Mine** is out of ink.
- The new uniforms came today. **Yours** is hanging up in the change room.
- My pen ran out of ink, can I borrow **yours**?
- Someone tell Christopher to pull up **his** pants, **his** underwear is showing.
- Juan is very proud of **his** new car. Have you seen it yet?
- People think I look like Rebecca but my hair is brown and **hers** is blond.
- Isabella brought three coffees from Starbucks. One is for Mark, one is for Eric and the last one is **hers**.
- My dog is always chasing **its** tail.
- If you turn the sofa on **its** side it will fit through the door.

- If you drive down Main Street you'll see many new houses, **ours** is on the corner with a green tile roof.
- The future is not **ours** to see.
- Adopting a puppy from a shelter will warm your hearts and **theirs**.
- A couple posted pictures on Facebook of their new home but, the fancy home shown in the photos was not **theirs**.

## IDIOM

Don't judge a book by **its** cover. = You should not judge the worth or value of something only by how it looks. There might be more value inside that you can't yet see.

[SOURCE](#)

## Confusing Contractions ITS vs. IT'S

\***Its** is a possessive pronoun that DOESN'T use an apostrophe. Remember that no possessive pronouns use an apostrophe. **It's** is the contraction of IT IS. Compare these sentences:

The dog lost **its** ball. (**Its** is a possessive pronoun connecting the ball to the dog. The ball belongs to the dog. No apostrophe.)

**It's** raining. (**It's** is a contraction of IT IS that is explaining the current weather conditions. There is an apostrophe before the S.)

## FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions)

### What are the 7 possessive nouns?

Possessive pronouns are "mine", "yours", "his", "hers", "ours", "theirs", and "its."

### What's the difference between MY and MINE?

MY and MINE are both *possessives*. The difference is that MY is a *possessive adjective* (also called a *determiner*) and MINE is a *possessive pronoun*.

A *pronoun* can be used by itself to replace a **noun**.

An **adjective** cannot be used by itself to replace a **noun**. The possessive adjective MY must be used *with* a noun.

Please look at the following examples.

### Whose keys are these?

- They're mine. (Ok.) MINE can be used by itself.
- They're my keys. (Ok.) MY needs to be followed by the noun keys.

~~They're my.~~ (Incorrect) MY cannot be used by itself.

The possessive pronoun HIS can also be used as a possessive adjective.

- They're his. (Ok.)
- They're his keys. (Ok.)

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HERS, OURS, and THEIRS are only pronouns. They *CANNOT* be used as possessive adjectives.

- They're **hers**.
- They're **ours**.
- They're **theirs**.

The possessive adjective ITS also must be used with a noun.

### **What is the dog looking for?**

The dog is looking for **its ball**. (Ball is necessary in the sentence. The ball that belongs to the dog.)

### **Which possessive adjectives should I use for animals? Its - His - Her?**

If an animal is unknown to us, the possessive pronoun **its** is natural.

- I saw a raccoon in the park this morning. It was walking funny, I think it hurt **its** leg. (I don't know if the raccoon is a male or female.)
- There is a stray cat in my neighborhood. **Its** tail is missing. (I don't know if the stray cat is a male or female.)

We often use gender-specific pronouns for animals that we know well, like our pets or famous characters.

- My dog played with my baseball this morning and now she thinks it's **hers**.
- My sister carries her Snoopy school bag everywhere. She thinks **his** nose is cute.



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