ENGLISH, LITERACY, AND COMMUNICATION

Apostrophes

Difficulty level: Intermediate

English, Literacy, and Communication

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Overview of the concept

This is how you show in writing that something belongs to someone, like Sara's bike, or that two words have been shortened into one, like don't. The apostrophe is a tiny mark, but putting it in the wrong place changes the meaning of a sentence. Getting it right keeps your writing clear and stops your reader from having to guess what you meant.



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Worked examples

EXAMPLE 1

Q Fix: The dogs bone is buried.

SOLUTION

The bone belongs to one dog, so use a possessive.

For a singular noun, add apostrophe plus s: dog's.

Fixed: The dog's bone is buried.

EXAMPLE 2

Q Fix: I cant come today.

SOLUTION

'cant' is a contraction of 'cannot'.

The apostrophe goes where letters are left out: can't.

Fixed: I can't come today.

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Practice questions

1 Fix: The cats toys are everywhere. (more than one cat)

- **A** The cat's toys are everywhere.
- **B** The cats' toys are everywhere.
- **C** The cats toys' are everywhere.
- **D** The cats's toys are everywhere.

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2 Fix: She doesnt like rain.

- **A** She does'nt like rain.
- **B** She doesn't like rain.
- **C** She doesnt' like rain.
- **D** She dont' like rain.

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3 Fix: This is Toms hat.

- A This is Toms' hat.
- B This is Tom' hat.
- C This is Tom's hat.
- D This is Toms's hat.

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4 Fix: The babys cry woke us.

- A The babys' cry woke us.
- B The baby's cry woke us.
- C The babies' cry woke us.
- D The babys's cry woke us.

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5 Fix: They wont be late.

A They wont' be late.

B They will'nt be late.

C They won't be late.

D They wo'nt be late.

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6 Fix: The girls coats are hung up. (more than one girl)

A The girls' coats are hung up.

B The girl's coats are hung up.

C The girls coats' are hung up.

D The girls's coats are hung up.

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7 Fix: Its a sunny day. (contraction of it is)

- A Its's a sunny day.
- B It's a sunny day.
- C Its' a sunny day.
- D It's' a sunny day.

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8 Fix: The books cover is torn. (one book)

- A The books' cover is torn.
- B The books's cover is torn.
- C The book cover's is torn.
- D The book's cover is torn.

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9 Fix: Weve finished.

- A Weve's finished.
- B We've finished.
- C Weve' finished.
- D W'eve finished.

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10 Fix: That is James bike.

- A That is James' bike.
- B That is Jame's bike.
- C That is James's bike.
- D That is Jamess' bike.

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ANSWER KEY

1. The cats' toys are everywhere.

2. She doesn't like rain.

3. This is Tom's hat.

4. The baby's cry woke us.

5. They won't be late.

6. The girls' coats are hung up.

7. It's a sunny day.

8. The book's cover is torn.

9. We've finished.

10. That is James's bike.

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