Perfect Punctuation
Part Four: The Apostrophe

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Learning Outcomes for Part Four

By the end of this presentation, you should be able to:

- Understand how to use an apostrophe with a singular and plural noun.
- Avoid common errors students make with apostrophes.
Overview of Screencast (Part Four)

1. Explain three rules for the apostrophe.
2. Describe the errors students commonly make with apostrophes.
3. Avoid these errors in your own writing.
Apostrophe Rule #1

- Form the possessive of a singular noun by adding an apostrophe and “s.”

  ✓ After playing in the mud, Elaine’s dogs rushed into the house to greet Tammy.
  ✓ The Great Dane put her muddy paws on Tammy’s white skirt.
Apostrophe Rule #2

- Form the possessive of a singular noun ending in “s” by adding an apostrophe and “s.”

  ✓ Jess’s speech was a success.
  ✓ Her boss’s office had a beautiful view.
Apostrophe Rule #3

- Form the possessive of a plural noun by adding an apostrophe and “s.” If the plural noun ends in “s,” add an apostrophe after the “s.”

- Tammy did not appreciate the children’s giggles.
- She jumped out of her chair, knocking over both dogs’ water bowls.
- The employees liked their bosses’ ideas for improvement.
Common Errors -- Apostrophes

- Omitting apostrophes and putting them in when they shouldn’t be there.
- Using the singular possessive for a plural possessive (e.g., writing “the girl’s mother” when there are two girls.)
- Forming the possessive by writing your’s, her’s, his’, their’s, our’s, it’s. The correct usage is yours, hers, his, theirs, ours, its.
- Mistaking it’s for its and vice versa.
- Inserting the possessive into decades, e.g., the 1960’s, the 1990’s. Decades should be written like this: the 1960s, the 1990s, the 2000s.
Summary

- Review the rules for singular and plural nouns and apostrophes.
- Be especially careful when writing “its” and “it’s.”
- Make a list of the punctuation errors you tend to make.
- Do a special proofread for apostrophe errors.