

USES OF THE APOSTROPHE

THERE ARE TWO USES:

FIRSTLY, THERE IS THE APOSTROPHE FOR OMISSION. (AS IT IMPLIES THIS IS TO INDICATE MISSING LETTERS). SECONDLY, THERE IS THE POSSESSIVE APOSTROPHE.

FOR OMISSION:

THE APOSTROPHE FOR OMISSION IS THE MOST STRAIGHTFORWARD.

SOME WORDS COMBINE TO FORM CONTRACTIONS.

FOR EXAMPLE, IN THE NEGATIVE FORM: DO + NOT = DON'T

CAN + NOT = CAN'T (OR CANNOT). ALSO THERE IS THE FUTURE USE:

SHOULD + NOT = SHOULDN'T

SOME EXPRESSIONS ARE CONFLATED, FOR EXAMPLE: SIX OF THE CLOCK = SIX O'CLOCK

FOR POSSESSION:

THIS USE OF THE APOSTROPHE CAN BE CONFUSING: ' OR 'S

THE REASON FOR THIS IS THAT OWNERSHIP CAN BE EXPRESSED FOR GROUPS AS WELL AS INDIVIDUALS.

WHEN INDICATING OWNERSHIP IN THE SINGULAR YOU SHOULD USE 'S FOR EXAMPLE, THE DOG'S COLLAR; PETER'S PEN; JOE'S WALLET.

IN THE PLURAL, THERE ARE TWO POSSIBILITIES.

A SIMPLE PLURAL TAKES AN ' AT THE END OF THE WORD

FOR EXAMPLE, THE STUDENTS' PENS; THE BOYS' CLOTHING; THE TEACHERS' MEETING.

COLLECTIVE NOUNS:

IN ENGLISH THERE ARE WAYS TO INDICATE OWNERSHIP BY GROUPS OF PEOPLE OR THINGS KNOWN AS COLLECTIVE NOUNS.

EXAMPLES OF THESE ARE: THE WOMEN'S LEAGUE; THE PEOPLE'S WELFARE; THE CHILDREN'S PRESENTS.

NOTE THE POSITION OF THE APOSTROPHE, IT IS USED AS IN THE SINGULAR FORM.

THE COLLECTIVE NOUNS CAN BE RECOGNISED AS THEY DO NOT REQUIRE AN 'S TO MAKE THEM PLURAL BUT TO INDICATE OWNERSHIP.