APOSTROPHES

The **apostrophe** has three uses:

- To show <u>possession</u>
- To form a <u>contraction</u>
- To indicate <u>plurality of letters, numerals, symbols, and certain abbreviations</u>

POSSESSION

Use an ***apostrophe followed by an "s"*** to form the ***possessive case of a singular noun that does not already end in "s".***

Example: The **woman's** dog chased the **neighbor's** cat.

Use ***only an apostrophe*** to form the ***possessive case of a <u>plural noun</u> that <u>already ends in the letter "s".</u>***

Examples: The **ladies'** hats were attractive. The **students'** books were heavy.

The **bosses'** coats and the **Adamses'** hats were woolen.

Add ***apostrophe and an "s"*** if the word is ***<u>plural but does not end in "s."</u>***

Examples: The **people's** coats were in the closet. The **children's** toys were old.

For ***<u>compound nouns</u>***, use the ***<u>apostrophe and the letter "s"</u>*** on the word closest to the object possessed.

Examples: my mother-in-**law'**s pen; somebody **else's** pet

Use ***only an apostrophe OR an apostrophe and an "s"*** to form the ***<u>possessive of singular nouns ending with the letter "s":</u>***

Examples: **James'** books (or **James's** books), Jesus' (or **Jesus's)**

CONTRACTIONS

Use a **contraction** to <u>indicate letters left out</u>: Do not = **don't**, I am = **I'm**, should not = **shouldn't**

PLURALITY: <u>USUALLY, AN APOSTROPHE IS NOT USED TO SHOW PLURALITY</u>

Use an ***apostrophe and an "s"*** **only** to form the ***<u>plural of letters, numerals, and certain abbreviations.</u>***

Examples: I was born in the **1990's**. I got all **A'**s in English. I earned two **M.B.A.'s**

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: its and it's

The **<u>possessive forms of the third person pronoun</u>** are hers, his, and **<u>its</u>**, while **it's** = the <u>contraction</u> of **it is.**

The Writing Center

Trident Technical College Thornley Campus   writingcenter@tridenttech.edu
Building 510/ Room 137   574-6623