

# 80 Possession

Possessive determiners, possessive pronouns, apostrophe with "s," and the verbs "have" and "have got" are all used to express possession in English.

See also:

Forming questions 34 Verb patterns with objects 53 "This / that / these / those" 65

## 80.1 POSSESSIVE DETERMINERS

Possessive determiners are used before a noun to show who it belongs to. They change form depending on whether the owner is singular, plural, male, or female.



Felix is **my** cat.

I own the cat.



Coco is **your** rabbit.

The rabbit belongs to you.



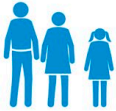
Buster is **her** dog.

The dog belongs to a woman.



Polly is **his** parrot.

The parrot belongs to a man.



Rachel is **our** daughter.

We are her parents.



John is **their** son.

They are his parents.

## HOW TO FORM

I



**my**



**my cat**



you



**your**



**your rabbit**



he



**his**



**his wife**



she



**her**



**her sister**



it



**its**



**its ball**



we



**our**



**our horse**



they



**their**



**their son**



## 80.2 POSSESSIVE PRONOUNS

Possessive pronouns can also be used to explain who owns something. Unlike possessive determiners, they replace the noun they are showing possession of.

The determiner comes before the noun.

This is **my** car.



These are **her** books.



This car is **mine**.



These books are **hers**.



The noun comes before the verb.

The possessive pronoun is used after the verb. It replaces "my car."

### HOW TO FORM

DETERMINERS

**my**

**your**

**his**

**her**

**its**

**our**

**their**



PRONOUNS

**mine**

**yours**

**his**

**hers**

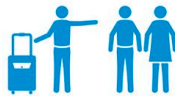
**its**

**ours**

**theirs**

### FURTHER EXAMPLES

This is **their** suitcase.



That suitcase is **theirs**.



We're staying in **our** new villa.



The villa is **ours**.



The boy is playing with **his** toys.



All these toys are **his**.



I'll bring some food to **your** picnic.



The rest of the food is **yours**.



## 80.3 APOSTROPHE WITH "S"

An apostrophe and the letter "s" are added to the end of a singular noun to show that what comes after the noun belongs to it.

This form is correct in English, but it is not normally used.

the mother of Lizzie

Lizzie's mother



This is a common way of talking about belonging.

An apostrophe with an "s" shows ownership.

## FURTHER EXAMPLES

The "s" after the apostrophe is optional when the noun already ends in an "-s."

Tess' dog



Tia's rabbit



Dave's grandmother



If something belongs to more than one noun, "-s" is only added to the last one.

Juan and Beth's parrot



The baby's toy



The dog's ball



## ! COMMON MISTAKES APOSTROPHES

Apostrophes are often incorrectly added before the "s" when talking about years or decades.



I was born in the 1960s. ✓

The best decade was the 70s. ✓

I was born in the 1960's. ✗

The best decade was the 70's. ✗

This is neither possessive nor a contraction, so there is no need for an apostrophe.

## 80.4 APOSTROPHES AND PLURAL NOUNS

To show belonging with a plural noun that ends in “-s,” just an apostrophe with no “s” is added.

Ginger is my **parents’** cat.

Plural nouns that end with “-s” use an apostrophe with no extra “s.”



To show belonging with a plural noun that doesn't end in “-s,” an apostrophe and an “s” are added.

Polly is our **children’s** parrot.

This is formed in the same way as singular nouns, with an apostrophe and “s.”



### FURTHER EXAMPLES

My **friends’** dog is called Rex.



I’m looking after my **cousins’** rabbit.



That is his **grandparents’** house.



She cares about her **students’** grades.



These are the **men’s** rooms.



It depends on the **people’s** vote.



It is important not to confuse “its” with “it’s.” “Its” is a third person singular possessive determiner, and never has an apostrophe. “It’s” is only ever a contraction of “it is.”



The dog is playing with **its** ball. ✓

**It’s** a shiny, red ball. ✓

This is a possessive so needs no apostrophe.

The dog is playing with **it’s** ball. ✗

**Its** a shiny, red ball. ✗

This is a contraction of “it is,” so should have an apostrophe before the “s.”

## 80.5 "HAVE"

The verb "have" can be used to talk about what people own.

"Has" is used for the third person singular (he, she, or it).

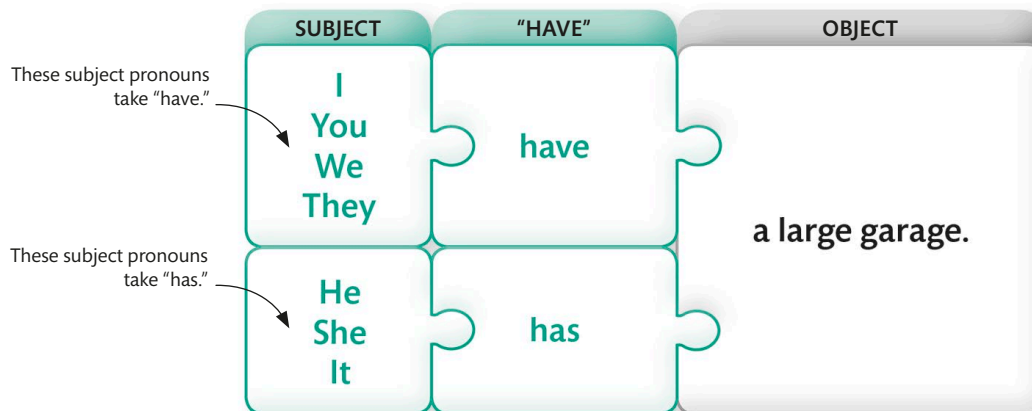
**I have a large garage.**



**She has a yard.**



## HOW TO FORM



## 80.6 "HAVE" NEGATIVES

Although "have" is irregular, its negative is formed in the usual way. The negative form can also be contracted as with other verbs.



**I have a bathtub.**



I { do not  
don't } have a bathtub.

"Do not" can be shortened to "don't."

**Jim has a bathtub.**



Jim { does not  
doesn't } have a bathtub.

"Does not" can be shortened to "doesn't."

"Have" is always used instead of "has" in the negative.

## 80.7 "HAVE" AND "HAVE GOT"

"Have got" is another way to say "has" when talking about possession. "Have" is appropriate in all situations, but "have got" is only used in spoken UK English.

**I have** a new phone.

"I've" cannot be used in this context.



**I've got** a new phone.

"I have" can become "I've" when used with "got."

"Got" doesn't change when the subject changes.

**I don't have** a dishwasher.



**I haven't got** a dishwasher.

"Have not" can become "haven't" when used with "got."

**Do you have** your keys?

The subject sits between "do" and "have" in questions.



**Have you got** your keys?

The subject sits between "have" and "got" in questions.

## 80.8 ANSWERING "HAVE" QUESTIONS

Short answers to "have" questions can be given using "do" and "don't."



**Do you have** a microwave?

"Do" is added to form a question.

**Yes, I do.**

"Do" goes in the positive answer.

**No, I don't.**

"Do not" or "don't" go in the negative answer.

Questions and answers using "have got" are formed differently. "Have got" is mostly heard in UK English.



**Have you got** a microwave?

"Have" or "has" moves to the start of the question.

**Yes, I have.**

"Have" goes in the positive answer.

**No, I haven't.**

"Got" does not move.

"Have not" or "haven't" go in the negative answer.