APOSTROPHES
How and When To Use Them In Your Writing

POSSESSIVE SINGULAR NOUNS

Add ‘s, even if the word ends in s!

Examples:

The professor’s classroom is spacious.
The classroom belongs to the professor.

The class’s curriculum is straightforward.
The curriculum belongs to the class. Even though “class” ends in s, we still add ’s to make the singular noun possessive.

POSSESSIVE PLURAL NOUNS

When the plural noun does not end in s:

All of the children’s toys are in the living room.
The toys belong to all of the children.

When the plural noun does end in s:

The countries’ populations are all different.
The countries are possessive of their own populations. Because “country” in its plural form “countries” ends in s, we only add a single apostrophe after the word to make it possessive.

ACRONYMS

Acronyms are treated as words when expressing them in the possessive and plural forms.

Possessive:
The CEO’s job was at stake.
The job belongs to the CEO. Adding ’s to an acronym makes it possessive.

Plural:
The CEOs of both companies are highly-skilled individuals.
We only add s to the end of CEO to make it plural.

AVOIDING APOSTROPHE MISTAKES

Pay attention to whether a noun is already plural.
 Decide if the noun should be singular possessive or plural possessive.

Remember that acronyms are treated as words while expressing them as plural or possessive!