

Hard & Fast Rules for Using *Apostrophes*

Rule

Examples

INB Page

1. Do NOT use for numbers that are plural nouns.

I grew up in the 1990s. (not 1990's)

2. Do NOT use for capital letters that are plural nouns or abbreviations.

We learned our ABCs. (not ABC's)
Jim sells R.V.s (not R.V.'s)

3. DO use for contractions in the place of missing letters.

you're (you are)
don't (do not)

4. DO use 's to show possession when something belongs to one person or thing.

the hat's feather
Jenny's bike
the child's mother

5. DO use after the plural s to show possession when something belongs to more than one person or thing. Make the noun plural first, then add the apostrophe.

the girls' room
the children's father
the dogs' toys

6. DO use 's to show possession of a name that ends in s.

Mr. Jones's files
Texas's weather

7. Its and it's are special cases.
its - something belongs to it
it's - contraction for it is or it has

The dog wagged its tail.
It's going to be warm today!
It's been a long time.

Hard & Fast Rules Practice *Apostrophes*

Each sentence below contains mistakes. Use your "Hard & Fast Rules" sheet to identify the mistakes and correct them in the space below. Then, identify which rule(s) apply to the sentence.

1. Jeremys brand new fishing pole is already broken.

2. Dont overuse the apostrophe!

3. The American Civil War was fought between the North and the South in the 1860's.

4. Its a good idea to avoid the lions habitat.

5. My cousins and I went to see James' new lab puppies.

6. There are several old VCR's just sitting in the attic.