

# Possessive Nouns

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# Grammar Notes

## POSSESSIVE NOUNS

### A. Introduction to Possessives

Think of a noun such as *book*, *car*, or *dog*. How do we show that the noun **belongs** to someone? We can use a **possessive noun**, **possessive adjective**, or **possessive pronoun**.

Noun	Possessive Noun	Possessive Adjective	Possessive Pronoun
book	This is <b>Alanna's</b> book.	This is <b>her</b> book.	This book is <b>hers</b> .
car	That is <b>Manuel's</b> car.	That is <b>his</b> car.	That car is <b>his</b> .
dog	It is <b>Sachiko and Jun's</b> dog.	It is <b>their</b> dog.	That dog is <b>theirs</b> .

In this lesson, we will focus on **possessive nouns**.

### B. Singular Possessive Nouns

To form the possessive of regular nouns, we add **'s**. We use this possessive noun before another noun. If there is an article (*a*, *an*, *the*), the possessive noun goes between the article and the other noun.

Singular Noun	Singular Possessive Noun	Example
person	person's	a person's wallet
child	child's	a child's toy
woman	woman's	a woman's car
man	man's	a man's shoes
Aki	Aki's	Aki's jacket
movie	movie's	a movie's ending
Ferrari	Ferrari's	a Ferrari's engine

## Grammar Notes cont.

### C. Plural Possessive Nouns

To form the possessive of plural nouns, we add an **apostrophe** after the plural -s ending. We use this possessive noun before another noun.

Plural Noun	Plural Possessive Noun	Example
kids	kids'	kids' playground
ladies	ladies'	ladies' room
students	students'	students' tests
schools	schools'	schools' gymnasiums
leaves	leaves'	leaves' colors

### D. Irregular Possessive Nouns

There are many plural nouns in English that are **irregular**. This means they don't end in -s like regular plural nouns. How do we form the plural possessive for irregular nouns such as *person* and *child*? Take a guess before you look at the chart below!

Plural Noun	Plural Possessive Noun	Example
people	people's	people's opinions
women	women's	women's restroom
men	men's	men's locker room
children	children's	children's bicycles
geese	geese's	geese's food

#### Did You Notice?

We form the plural of possessive nouns that don't end in -s the same way we form singular possessive nouns. In other words, we add **'s** to the irregular plural noun.

## Grammar Notes cont.

### E. Possessive Nouns Ending in -s

How do we form the possessive of singular nouns that end in -s? Not everyone agrees, but the most common way is to follow the same rules as other singular nouns. In other words, we add **'s** to a singular noun even if it ends in -s.

Singular Noun	Singular Possessive Noun	Example
class	class's	a class's students
boss	boss's	the boss's desk
rhinoceros	rhinoceros's	a rhinoceros's horn
Barbados	Barbados's	Barbados's beaches
Dickens	Dickens's	Dickens's novels

### F. Multiple Possessives

If a noun has co-ownership, only one **'s** (for singular possessive nouns) or one **apostrophe** (for plural possessive nouns) is necessary.

- That is **Juan and Maria's house**. (They live in the same house.)
- **The brother and sister's car** is in the shop. (They share one car.)
- **Our dogs and cats' vet** is very experienced. (We have two dogs and two cats, and they all have the same veterinarian.)

If there are two separate nouns, two **'s** (for singular possessive nouns) or two **apostrophes** (for plural possessive nouns) are necessary.

- **This school's and that school's teams** will play against each other next Friday. (There are two different teams from two different schools.)
- Did you find **Sayid's and Kamal's jackets**? (They each have their own jacket.)
- **The boys' and girls' backpacks** were stolen. (There are two or more boys and two or more girls. Both groups have backpacks.)

## Exercise 1

### SINGULAR POSSESSIVE NOUNS

Complete the chart with the possessive form of each noun.  
Can you add five more nouns to the chart?

#	Noun	Possessive Form
Ex	baby	<i>baby's</i>
1	boy	
2	girl	
3	dog	
4	cat	
5	class	
6	Johanne	
7	Christina	

#	Noun	Possessive Form
8	London	
9	Russia	
10	Atlantic Ocean	
11		
12		
13		
14		
15		

## Exercise 2 (Student A)

### WHO'S VS. WHOSE

#### A. Who's This?

Who's that person? With a partner,  
fill in the missing information.

#### Example 1

Student B: Who's this? *[points to image 1]*

Student A: It's Pablo.

Student B: Can you spell that, please?

Student A: P-A-B-L-O.

#### Who's Vs. Whose

*Who's* and *whose* sound the same but have different uses.  
*Who's* means **who is**. We use it to ask about a person.

Question: **Who's** this?

Answer: It's **Dave**.

*Whose* is a possessive pronoun. We use it to ask who  
a noun **belongs** to. Notice the verb in the question.

Question: **Whose** car is it?

Answer: It's **Silvia's** car.



1. Name: Pablo



2. Name: \_\_\_\_\_



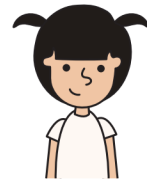
3. Name: Michelle



4. Name: \_\_\_\_\_



5. Name: Abdi



6. Name: \_\_\_\_\_



7. Name: Yuki



8. Name: \_\_\_\_\_



9. Name: Silvia

## Exercise 2 (Student B)

### WHO'S VS. WHOSE

#### A. Who's This?

Who's that person? With a partner, fill in the missing information.

#### Example 1

Student B: Who's this? *[points to image 1]*

Student A: It's Pablo.

Student B: Can you spell that, please?

Student A: P-A-B-L-O.

#### Who's Vs. Whose

*Who's* and *whose* sound the same but have different uses. *Who's* means **who is**. We use it to ask about a person.

Question: **Who's** this?

Answer: It's **Dave**.

*Whose* is a possessive pronoun. We use it to ask who a noun **belongs** to. Notice the verb in the question.

Question: **Whose** car is it?

Answer: It's **Silvia's** car.



1. Name: \_\_\_\_\_



2. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ *Dave* \_\_\_\_\_



3. Name: \_\_\_\_\_



4. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ *Lydia* \_\_\_\_\_



5. Name: \_\_\_\_\_



6. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ *Mi-Jin* \_\_\_\_\_



7. Name: \_\_\_\_\_



8. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ *Bianca* \_\_\_\_\_

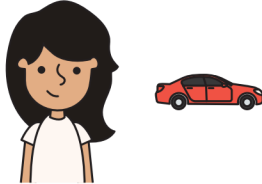
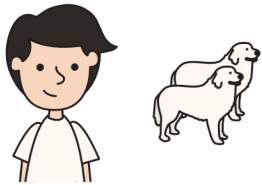

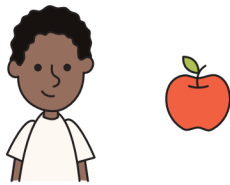
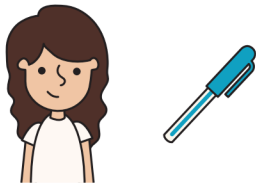


9. Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Exercise 2 cont.

### B. Whose Is It?

Work with your partner. Write the missing nouns and the answers to each question. Look back on pages 6 and 7 if you forget the people's names.

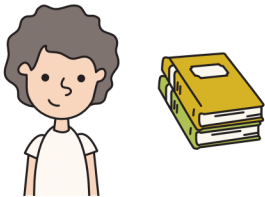
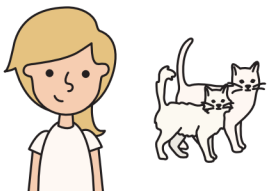
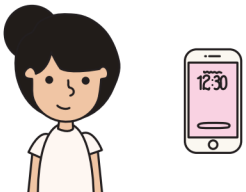

#	Picture	Question & Answer
1		Whose <u>car</u> is it? <u>It's Silvia's car.</u>
2		Whose <u>dogs</u> are they? <u>They're Dave's dogs.</u>
3		Whose _____ is it? _____
4		Whose _____ is it? _____
5		Whose _____ is it? _____





## Exercise 2 cont.

### B. Whose Is It? cont.

#	Picture	Question & Answer
6		Whose _____ are they? _____
7		Whose _____ are they? _____
8		Whose _____ is it? _____
9		Whose _____ are they? _____

## Exercise 3

### PLURAL POSSESSIVE NOUNS

Fill in the blanks with the possessive form of the plural noun in parentheses.

Ex. This is the \_\_\_\_\_ *teachers'* \_\_\_\_\_ room.  
(teachers)

1. We need to discuss the \_\_\_\_\_ salaries.  
(athletes)
2. Don't touch the \_\_\_\_\_ supplies.  
(nurses)
3. Did you pick up the \_\_\_\_\_ toys?  
(children)
4. On the news tonight, we will find out two \_\_\_\_\_ election results.  
(countries)
5. I need to wash my \_\_\_\_\_ bowls before I feed them again.  
(dogs)
6. We need to count the \_\_\_\_\_ tips before we close the restaurant tonight.  
(servers)
7. Excuse me. Where is the \_\_\_\_\_ restroom?  
(men)
8. Did you attend the \_\_\_\_\_ meeting?  
(managers)
9. Before I make my decision, I'd like some other \_\_\_\_\_ opinions.  
(people)
10. We visited the \_\_\_\_\_ memorial.  
(heroes)

## Exercise 4

### SINGULAR & PLURAL POSSESSIVE NOUNS

Complete the chart with the possessive form of each noun.  
Can you add five more nouns to the chart on page 12?

#	Singular Noun	Singular Possessive Form	Plural Noun	Plural Possessive Form
Ex	car	<i>car's</i>	cars	<i>cars'</i>
1	student		students	
2	child		children	
3	woman		women	
4	man		men	
5	person		people	
6	boss		bosses	
7	wife		wives	
8	box		boxes	



## Exercise 4 cont.

#	Singular Noun	Singular Possessive Form	Plural Noun	Plural Possessive Form
9	tooth		teeth	
10	puppy		puppies	
11				
12				
13				
14				
15				

## Exercise 5

### ASK & ANSWER

Look around your classroom and find 10 different objects.  
Ask your partner who those objects belong to.  
Answer your partner's questions orally.

Ex. A: Whose desk is that?

B: That's Lee's desk.

1. Whose \_\_\_\_\_ is that?

2. Whose \_\_\_\_\_ is that?

3. Whose \_\_\_\_\_ is that?

4. Whose \_\_\_\_\_ is that?

5. Whose \_\_\_\_\_ is that?

6. Whose \_\_\_\_\_ is that?

7. Whose \_\_\_\_\_ is that?

8. Whose \_\_\_\_\_ is that?

9. Whose \_\_\_\_\_ is that?

10. Whose \_\_\_\_\_ is that?

## Exercise 6

### WHAT'S THE MEANING?

Discuss the sentences with your partner or group members.  
Write the number of the better explanation on the right.

#	Sentence	Explanation 1	Explanation 2	What's the Meaning?
Ex	I borrowed Bruno and Nikki's guitar.	Bruno and Nikki share one guitar.	Bruno and Nikki have two different guitars.	1
1	Team A's and Team B's uniforms are ready to be picked up.	Team A and Team B have the same uniform.	Team A and Team B have different uniforms.	
2	I babysat Akio and Mai's children.	Akio and Mai have children together. (They're related.)	Akio has a child and Mai has a child. (They're not related.)	
3	Enrique and Julia's dog got sick.	Enrique and Julia share one dog.	Enrique and Julia have two different dogs.	
4	The boys and girls' club meets every Thursday.	The boys and girls are in the same club.	The boys and girls are in two different clubs.	
5	The babies' and childrens' toys were in the same pile.	The babies and children share the same toys.	The babies and children have different toys.	

## Exercise 7

### MIXED POSSESSIVES

Are the words in **bold** possessive nouns, adjectives, or pronouns?  
Put a check mark (✓) in the correct column.

#	Phrase	Possessive Noun	Possessive Adjective	Possessive Pronoun
Ex	<b>Mala's</b> tennis racket	✓		
1	<b>my</b> desk			
2	<b>Carlos's</b> friend			
3	<b>our</b> dog			
4	It's <b>mine</b> .			
5	<b>a person's</b> name			
6	It's <b>theirs</b> .			
7	That's <b>ours</b> .			
8	<b>their</b> books			
9	<b>its</b> bowl			
10	<b>the ladies'</b> room			
11	<b>Aki and Junko's</b> apartment			
12	Is this <b>yours</b> ?			
13	<b>Korea's</b> currency			
14	<b>the men's</b> room			
15	<b>your</b> keys			

## Exercise 8

### QUIZ

Choose the correct answer.

1. I need to sharpen the \_\_\_\_\_ edges.  
a) knives'  
b) knife's
2. That \_\_\_\_\_ clothing store is expensive.  
a) womens'  
b) women's
3. Did you see that \_\_\_\_\_ artwork?  
a) class'  
b) class's
4. I borrowed my \_\_\_\_\_ car.  
a) friend's  
b) friends
5. Both \_\_\_\_\_ locations are near my house.  
a) libraries'  
b) library's
6. I'm going to \_\_\_\_\_ house after school.  
a) Maya's and Erik's  
b) Maya and Erik's
7. A \_\_\_\_\_ owner needs a lot of energy.  
a) puppy's  
b) puppies'
8. They cleaned the \_\_\_\_\_ cages.  
a) mice's  
b) mices'
9. Did you understand that \_\_\_\_\_ jokes?  
a) comedians'  
b) comedian's
10. This \_\_\_\_\_ units include all the basic verb tenses.  
a) textbooks'  
b) textbook's
11. Those \_\_\_\_\_ books are cheaper than I expected.  
a) childrens'  
b) children's
12. Did you see \_\_\_\_\_ paintings in the art gallery?  
a) Picasso's and Van Gogh's  
b) Picasso and Van Gogh's



# Grammar Assessment

Student / Group: \_\_\_\_\_

Date	Level	Assessed By	Target	Skill
			Possessive Nouns	Grammar

Criteria	Achieved 	Achieved with Help 	Needs Improvement 
forms the possessive of singular nouns			
forms the possessive of singular nouns ending in -s			
forms the possessive of regular plural nouns			
forms the possessive of irregular plural nouns			
uses the correct possessive forms when speaking			
knows the meaning of multiple possessive nouns			
knows the difference between possessive nouns, adjectives, and pronouns			

<b>Notes</b>          
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# Self-Assessment

## POSSESSIVE NOUNS

Add check marks (✓) to show what you've learned in this lesson.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Can I...	Yes (very well) 	Yes (with help) 	Not yet 
write possessive nouns correctly?			
say possessive nouns correctly?			
write irregular plural possessive nouns properly?			
choose the correct meaning of multiple possessive nouns?			
tell the difference between possessive nouns, adjectives, and pronouns?			

**My Notes**

# Answer Key

### LESSON DESCRIPTION:

In this lesson, students learn how to form singular and plural possessive nouns, including nouns that end in -s. They also review the difference between possessive nouns, adjectives, and pronouns.

**LEVEL:** Low Int – Int

**TIME:** 2–3 hours

**TAGS:** possessive, possessive nouns, singular, plural, regular, irregular, nouns, grammar, assessment

## Exercise 1

Answers will vary for 11–15.

- |            |                      |
|------------|----------------------|
| 1. boy's   | 6. Johanne's         |
| 2. girl's  | 7. Christina's       |
| 3. dog's   | 8. London's          |
| 4. cat's   | 9. Russia's          |
| 5. class's | 10. Atlantic Ocean's |

## Exercise 2

### A. WHO'S THIS?

Review the difference between who's and whose with your students. Remind them to ask their partners about spelling if they're unsure (e.g., *How do you spell that?*).

### B. WHOSE IS IT?

You may want to review the vocabulary/spelling of the nouns they'll need on pages 8–9 before they begin.

1. It's Silvia's car.
2. They're Dave's dogs.
3. It's Mi-Jin's umbrella.
4. It's Abdi's apple.
5. It's Bianca's pen.
6. They're Lydia's books.
7. They're Michelle's cats.
8. It's Yuki's phone/cell phone/mobile phone.
9. They're Pablo's shoes.

## Exercise 3

- |               |              |
|---------------|--------------|
| 1. athletes'  | 6. servers'  |
| 2. nurses'    | 7. men's     |
| 3. children's | 8. managers' |
| 4. countries' | 9. people's  |
| 5. dogs'      | 10. heroes'  |

## Exercise 4

Answers will vary for 11–15.

- |                         |                       |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. student's, students' | 6. boss's, bosses'    |
| 2. child's, children's  | 7. wife's, wives'     |
| 3. woman's, women's     | 8. box's, boxes'      |
| 4. man's, men's         | 9. tooth's, teeth's   |
| 5. person's, people's   | 10. puppy's, puppies' |

## Exercise 5

Answers will vary.

## Exercise 6

1. Explanation 2
2. Explanation 1
3. Explanation 1
4. Explanation 1
5. Explanation 2

(continued on the next page...)

## Answer Key cont.

### Exercise 7

Optional exercise. Can be done as a preview or a review, depending on if your students have previously studied possessive adjectives and pronouns. Try our Pronouns 1 lesson for further practice:

<https://esllibrary.com/courses/88/lessons/1624>

- |                         |                          |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. possessive adjective | 9. possessive adjective  |
| 2. possessive noun      | 10. possessive noun      |
| 3. possessive adjective | 11. possessive noun      |
| 4. possessive pronoun   | 12. possessive pronoun   |
| 5. possessive noun      | 13. possessive noun      |
| 6. possessive pronoun   | 14. possessive noun      |
| 7. possessive pronoun   | 15. possessive adjective |
| 8. possessive adjective |                          |

### Exercise 8

- |      |      |      |      |       |       |
|------|------|------|------|-------|-------|
| 1. a | 3. b | 5. a | 7. a | 9. b  | 11. b |
| 2. b | 4. a | 6. b | 8. a | 10. b | 12. a |

### Grammar Assessment

Use this tool for assessment purposes. Find alternative assessment tools that you can personalize in our Resources section:

<https://esllibrary.com/resources>

### Self-Assessment

Have your students fill out this form. Find alternative self-reflection tools that you can personalize in our Resources section:

<https://esllibrary.com/resources>

#### SPELLING NOTE:

This lesson shows the American spelling of the word *Color*.  
Most other English-speaking countries spell it this way: *Colour*.  
Make it a challenge for your students to find this word in the lesson and see if they know the alternate spelling.