

Greetings!

Special Edition: National Punctuation Day

To celebrate this year's National Punctuation Day, let's hear it for the apostrophe, which unfortunately is slowly being forced out of use. But we won't give up!

The Little Apostrophe That Could

Apostrophes serve double duty in your punctuation arsenal. They are used both to indicate possession and replace letters in contractions. Two for the price of one!

Possession Is Nine-tenths of the Law

First, the apostrophe is used to indicate that a noun is possessive. In other words, it functions as shorthand for the words of or that belongs to:

Kathy's company (the company that belongs to Kathy)

Charlie's wife (the wife of Charlie)

20 years' experience (20 years of experience)

People get hung up on when to add an apostrophe and an s or just an apostrophe. Here's the (simplified) deal.

Add an apostrophe and an s:

- If the noun does not end in s (*the horse's mouth, women's rights*)
- If the noun is singular and ends in s or an s sound (*a bass's stripes*)

Add just an apostrophe:

- If the noun is plural and ends in s (*puppies' paws*)
- If the noun is plural in form but singular in meaning (*politics' true meaning*)

For joint possession, add an apostrophe and s to the last noun only:

Kathy and Charlie's cats

It's English, so of course there's a bit more to it than that. But if you master these basics, you'll be correct more often than not.

Could've, Would've, Should've

Apostrophes are also used to replace one or more missing letters in contractions:

Don't, won't, can't

Here's a good one:

It's = it is, but its = possessive (don't you just love it?)

On the other hand, we don't want to see an apostrophe with plural numbers (*the 1980s*), letters (*mind your Ps and Qs*), and abbreviations (*SOPs*). And please, please, please, don't use an apostrophe and s to make a family or formal name plural (*the Simpsons*, not *the Simpson's*). Our local motorcycle gang does that, and it's very disturbing. C'mon guys, show some class!

But do have a happy National Punctuation Day!

We hope you enjoyed this special edition of KB CommEntary. Stay tuned for our regular Fall 2013 issue, coming in a few weeks.

And please remember, *when it has to be right*, KB COMM is here to help.

Sincerely,

Kathy

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KB COMM

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