Worksheet for Apostrophe Use

The apostrophe has three uses: 1. To form possessives of nouns
2. To show the omission of letters -- contractions
3. To form plurals of numbers, letters, and symbols

**Possessive apostrophe:** This apostrophe shows that one thing is “owned” by another. To see if your word calls for a possessive apostrophe, turn the phrase around to make it an “of the…” phrase. Sentences that call for an “of the…” phrase need a possessive apostrophe. For example:

1. The dog’s bowel -- The bowel of the dog.
2. The boss’s report – The report of the boss.
3. The dogs’ bowels – The bowels of the dogs.
4. My father-in-law’s car is quite expensive.
5. Angela’s and Tommy’s papers were really well done.
6. Angela and Tommy’s house is lovely.

The possessive form of personal pronouns do not need apostrophes – so the words yours, his, hers, its, ours, theirs do not need apostrophes.

**Omission of Letters – Contractions:** This type of apostrophe indicates that letters or parts of a word are missing.

Examples: it is, it has / it’s  I would / I’d  will not / won’t  was not / wasn’t
he would / he’d  let us / let’s  I am / I’m  do not / don’t
can not / can’t  you will / you’ll  would have / would’ve (not would of!)

Be careful to distinguish between it’s and its: “Its” is the possessive form of it and does not need an apostrophe. “It’s” is the contraction for it is or it has and does need an apostrophe.

1. The book was old and tattered. Its binding was almost falling off.
2. Sometimes it’s profitable to buy old books, even if they are worn and frayed.

**Plurals of numbers, letters, and symbols:** Use an apostrophe and an “s” to form the plurals of numbers, letters, and symbols.

1. Many 80’s and 90’s were scored on the test.
   Note that an apostrophe is not needed when indicating years. Cars of the 90s were nondescript. Fashion of the 80s was very unusual.
2. I’m always happy when the students I tutor make A’s.
3. The student’s paper used many &’s instead of the actual word and.

Adapted from Purdue University’s Writing Website: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/
Practice Worksheet for Apostrophes

Practice editing the following sentences. Write a “C” by the sentence if it is correct. Write an “IC” by the sentence if it is incorrect. Then edit the sentence so that it contains the proper apostrophe punctuation.

1. The plants leaves were all yellow and brown.
2. The clock’s hands seemed to move slower as class continued.
3. The President-in-Chiefs car was waiting outside the building.
4. The Presidents-in-Chiefs body guard was in the car.
5. I would’ve gone to the show, but it was playing too late.
6. Jamess’ book bag was found in the library.
7. I have two boys named Joe is my class. Both Joe’s last names start with P.
8. I wish Johns grades were better.
9. Its a beautiful day outside; we should go for a run.
10. My childrens toys are scattered all over the house.
11. The e-mail addresses were all incorrect because they omitted the @s.
12. The man was surprised when the dogs collar broke because its material was supposed to be quite sturdy.
13. The weatherman said its going to rain.
14. Lisas and Eddies cat was very shy.
15. Toby’s and Juan’s trucks were both very large.
16. Toby and Juan’s Chemistry class was difficult to study for.
17. My typewriter key always sticks. It won’t type any gs.
18. She wasn’t allowed to go to the party due to her poor grades.
19. The actors wardrobe was very stylish.
20. The producers parking spaces were all at the front of the studio.

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