



CARDINAL HEENAN
CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

Using the Apostrophe

Apostrophes are used for two reasons:

1. To show contraction/abbreviation - When you shorten a word, taking out a letter or two
2. To show possession/belonging - Showing that something belongs to someone/-thing else

(a) Apostrophes for contraction: (when you shorten a word by missing out letters)

When you take any letters out of a word, an apostrophe is always used in place of the missing letter(s):

- Do not – Don't
- Could have – Could've etc.

(b) Apostrophes for possession (to show belonging)

This is a little trickier.

The basic rules:

To show that something (or many things) **belongs** to someone:

- **When the word is SINGULAR** – add the apostrophe BEFORE the s:

Examples:

- the dog's tail
- the teacher's pen (one dog/one teacher etc.)

A useful TIP is to remember to place the apostrophe straight after the "owner" (or "owners")

- **When the word is PLURAL**, the apostrophe is placed AFTER the s:
 - the horses' stable (horses plural)
 - two weeks' holiday
 - the dogs' kennel (dogs plural)

These rules work really well if you are just adding an "s"

However, when a word is already plural and does not end in s –then we go back to using the apostrophe BEFORE 's:

Examples:

- The children's toys
- the people's court

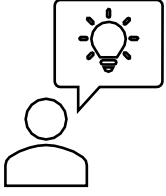


Capital Letters

Capital letters should be used:

- At the start of every sentence
- When referring to yourself as “I” (i.e. in the first person)
- For proper nouns (names):
 - people’s names/place names/days/months/organisations/brands/people’s initials and titles
 - **Examples:** Miss Gallagher, Leeds, Tuesday, January, Cardinal Heenan High School, Adidas, Mr/Mrs, Dr Bradley
- At the beginning of any new piece of dialogue in a sentence, whether it is at the beginning or in the middle/at the end.
 - **Example:** She said, “**P**lease come in.”
- For the main words in the titles of books/plays/games/films etc.
- Example: X-Men, Fortnite, Romeo and Juliet





Spelling strategies to help you:

1. Look for words within words to help remember tricky spellings-

Useful Examples/models

- a. the "fin" in definite
- b. the "ten" in sentence
- c. the "den" in independent.
- d. The "lie" in believe

Tip: For any tricky words, see if you can find smaller words within them to help you remember

2. Using a Dictionary: A dictionary is only really useful if you know the first three letters of a spelling, but try looking up your word and if you can't find it, tweak the first three letters and try again. There are many dictionaries available in school so ask your teacher if you need to borrow one.

3. Using a Thesaurus: If you know a word with a similar meaning (synonym), look this up in a **thesaurus** and your word may also be listed as a synonym.

4. Keep a personal spelling list in the back of your subject exercise books and add to it any time you correct a spelling. Use/check this every time you write. If you do this often, these spellings will soon be much easier to remember.

5. Mnemonics: Sometimes it is easy to remember a particularly difficult word by making up a funny mnemonic – usually the sillier the better! This involves using each letter to create part of a "story" or saying. A good example is the word BECAUSE:

Big Elephants Can't Always Use Small Elevators

6. Look/Say/Cover/Write/Check (LSCWCh):

This is a simple but effective way of learning spellings – all you do is follow the instructions above: LOOK at the spelling, SAY it a few times, COVER it over, WRITE it out. CHECK whether you have got it right.

Tip: You can use the "words within words" technique (number 1 in this list), then use the LSCWCh method to make sure you have remembered the spelling



Commonly Confused Words

There/Their/They're

- **There** is a “place” and is used for there is/are/was/were
- **Their** always belongs to them.
- **They're** is a contraction/abbreviation of they + are. The apostrophe replaces the missing letter “a” when the word is shortened.

E.g. They're going to freeze in there without their coats.

Your/You're

- **Your** always belongs to you
- **You're** is the contraction of you + are, for example: *You're doing your homework before dinner.*

Where/were/we're

- **Where:** A place.
Example: Where are you going? Where is it? (**Tip for remembering:** The word where has “here” in it!)
- **Were:** the PAST tense of “are” used with “you”/ “they”.
Example: Where were you? Were they in school today?
- **We're:** A shortened version of we + are
Example: We're going out later. I don't know where we're going.

Know/now/no

- **Know:** Verb meaning to have knowledge of something.
Example: I know you really well.
- **Now:** This means “at this moment”
Examples: Please do it now. Now I can do it!
- **No:** The complete opposite of “yes”
Example: I asked him but he said no. “No I won't do it!” she exclaimed.

Knew/new

- **Knew:** the past tense of the verb “know” (having knowledge)
Examples: She knew so much about history. He knew he was getting the award.
- **New:** Something unused or something you have never seen/done before.
Examples: He loved his new toy. This was a completely new experience.



Making sure the subject and verb agree: confusing was and were

Common problems:

Sometimes you will mix up the verbs “was” and “were”

The rules are:

(a) When you are talking about ONE person or thing (we call this SINGULAR)

- *There is (singular)* e.g. there is a bag on the floor
- *There was (singular/past tense)* e.g. there was a bag on the floor

(b) When you are talking about more than one person or thing (we call this PLURAL)

- *There are (plural)* e.g. there are lots of bags on the floor
- *There were (plural/past tense)* e.g. there were lots of bags on the floor

This table might also help you when you are trying to get this tricky grammar skill correct:

Present Tense	Past Tense
I am	I was
You are	You were
He/she/it is	We were
They are	They were

And finally, ...

- Sometimes you will also mistakenly use “they was” for “there was”. Try to avoid doing this.

