

# Its and It's.

**Its** and **It's** are often confused. This handout explains the difference between them, and shows where and when you should and should not be using them.

First, this short handout explains **its** (without an apostrophe), which is a possessive pronoun, and compares possessive pronouns with possessive nouns. Secondly, it explains **it's** (with an apostrophe), which is a contraction. Both possessive nouns and their contraction are included purely to clarify the distinctions regarding when and how they are used.

It is important to note that you should not use contractions in assignments.

## Its

This is the possessive pronoun, like “my”, “your”, and “their”.

### Examples:

- Every country has its traditions.
- The horse shut its eyes and neighed.
- This approach also has its disadvantages.

In contrast, **possessive nouns** *do* have an apostrophe, which stands for “of” or “belonging to”. It does not have to be a physical object.

### Examples:

- Michael's car broke down yesterday. (The car belonging to Michael).
- It was Janet's turn to lead the meeting. (The turn of Janet to lead).

## It's

The apostrophe indicates that this is a **contraction** that stands for “it is” or “it has”. The apostrophe replaces the missing letters.

### Examples:

- It's snowing again. This is a contraction of “it is”.
- Have you seen my jacket? It's disappeared. This is a contraction of “it has”.
- It's probably true that most pop stars use Autotune. This is a contraction of “it is.”

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