GERMANNA
ACADEMIC CENTER
FOR EXCELLENCE

Possessives

A possessive uses an apostrophe to show ownership or possession of someone or something.

Form a possessive if the phrase can be turned around and made into an "*of the*…" phrase. For example:

flower**'s** stem = stem of the flower
car**'s** windshield = windshield of the car

Refer to the following rules when forming a possessive:

1. Add ***'s*** after singular possessive nouns and indefinite pronouns.

   Hilda**'s** car
   the city**'s** industries
   everybody**'s** books
   John**'s** problem

2. Add ***'*** after plural possessive nouns that end in *s*.

   farmers**'** crops
   the Joneses**'** relatives
   the Smiths**'** travels
   critics**'** reviews

3. Add **'s** to plural possessive nouns that do not end in *s*.

   the children**'s** toys
   the women**'s** club
   men**'s** room

4. Add **'s** after singular possessive nouns that end in *s*.

   Kansas**'s** schools
   Francis**'s** promotion
   the bus**'s** light
   Tennessee Williams**'s** plays

5. With compound noun possessives, add **'s** to the second possessive noun to show joint ownership.

   Jimmy and Susie**'s** house *(they both own the same house)*

6. With compound noun possessives, add **'s** to both possessive nouns to show individual ownership.

   Erin**'s** and Janet**'s** bikes *(they own different bikes)*