Apostrophe Tip Sheet

Rules and uses to remember for apostrophes:

1) To make something possessive

-Add ‘s for the following:
  - the singular form of a noun (even if it ends in s) EX – dog’s, James’s, business’s
  -the plural form of a noun that does not end in s EX – children’s
  -the end of a compound noun EX – brother-in-law’s
  -joint possession EX – Mom and Dad’s money

    -The apostrophe after just the second name means the money belongs to both Mom and Dad. However, if they are not together, it would be:

    EX – Mom’s money and Dad’s money.

-Add ’ for the following:

  -plural nouns that end in s EX – countries’ laws

REMEMBER:

Acronyms are treated the exact same way as words when making them possessive or plural.

EX – The CEOs of both companies worked together to achieve a goal.

This example uses the proper plural form of an acronym.

EX – The CEO’s money was held in multiple bank accounts.

The possessive is formed with the same ‘s as any other word.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

1. Do not use an apostrophe to make a noun plural
   a. Adding an apostrophe will make it possessive, not plural.

      EX – Companies is the plural of company.
      Company’s is the possessive form.

2. Do not use an apostrophe with a personal pronoun
   a. EX – incorrect: The hat is her’s.
      EX – correct uses of a personal pronoun: It is her hat. The hat is hers.

3. Do not use an apostrophe when referring to a year
   a. EX – incorrect: 1960’s
      correct: 1960s