

APOSTROPHE GUIDANCE



OMISSION

Letters

(ALSO KNOWN AS CONTRACTIONS)

⚠ BUT AVOID IN ACADEMIC WRITING

- can't
- isn't
- don't
- etc.

Numbers

(SOMETIMES APPLIED TO DECADES)

- ✓ • '80s (for 1980s)
- ✗ • NOT 1980's



POSSESSION

ADD 'S TO THE END

- The policy's objectives

APA (7TH ED.) DOES THIS REGARDLESS OF HOW THE WORD ENDS.
CHICAGO, ON THE OTHER HAND, HAS SOME EXCEPTIONS:

WHEN A SINGULAR POSSESSIVE ENDS IN "S," ADD 'S AFTER THE S.

- The bus's passengers

EXCEPT...

WHEN THE SINGULAR AND PLURAL FORMS OF A NOUN ENDING IN "S" ARE THE SAME

- politics'
- series'

WHEN THE LAST ELEMENT OF AN OFFICIAL NAME IS A PLURAL FORM ENDING IN "S" (BUT THE NOUN ITSELF IS SINGULAR)

- United States'
- Special Forces'

FOR THESE EXCEPTIONS JUST ADD AN APOSTROPHE

IF THE ENDING "S" INDICATES A PLURAL, ADD JUST THE APOSTROPHE AFTER THE S.

- The policies' objectives
- The buses' passengers



NOT FOR PLURALS



- two cases
- WMDs
- The Joneses



- NOT two case's
- NOT WMD's
- NOT Jones's or Jones'

For more information, visit the [GWC page on apostrophes](#) or work with a writing coach!

