



Writing Center
Academic Affairs

Plural Possessives

Plural nouns:

A **noun** is a person, place, thing, or idea. A plural noun indicates more than one. Add an “s” to make most nouns plural. For example:

- books
- professors
- dogs
- cell phones
- pants

Singular Possessive noun:

A **singular possessive noun** indicates something belongs to someone or something—ownership. To indicate ownership, we add an apostrophe + s (’s). For example:

- cat’s tail
- sister’s purse
- tree’s roots
- Mary’s dog

Plural possessive nouns:

When a noun ends in “s”, we make plural possessives by adding an apostrophe (’) only. For example:

- professors’ books
- trees’ roots
- diplomats’ contracts
- cats’ fur
- universities’ websites

Example sentences using the above list:

1. Many professors’ books were left on the tables.
2. Pictures of several different kinds of trees’ roots were found in the botany texts.
3. The United Nations had many diplomats’ contracts voided.

Irregular nouns:

Now about **irregular nouns**. Irregular nouns are irregular because we do not always add an “s” to make them plural; sometimes the suffix (word ending) changes to make them plural. However, some spellings do not change; the word remains the same in singular or plural form. You should memorize many of these irregular nouns and their spellings. Here is a more complete list of irregular nouns and their plurals: <http://english-zone.com/spelling/plurals.html>

Irregular noun examples:

Singular Plural

woman – women

man – men

person – people

child – children

cactus – cacti

Plural Irregular Possessive Nouns:

Like the plural possessive noun, when a **plural irregular possessive noun** does not end in an “s” then we add an apostrophe + s (’s). For example:

- women’s
- men’s
- people’s
- children’s
- cacti’s

The example sentences are from the plural irregular possessive nouns list above:

1. Women’s clothing in department stores are sometimes expensive.
2. Men’s shoes are sized differently than women’s shoes.
3. Government concern for the cost of people’s health care gave us the affordable care act.

Pronouns:

Pronouns can also be plural possessive. Pronouns refer to the noun you’re talking about. For example: I, he, she, you, it, we, and they. But be careful because the subject of a sentence is clearer if you use a specific noun at the front of your sentence.

Plural Possessive Pronouns:

Here’s a list of **plural possessive pronouns**: Our, ours; your, yours; their, theirs. We use these plural possessive pronouns to indicate plural ownership.

The example sentences are from the plural possessive pronoun list above:

1. Our books, mine and Jim’s, were on the top bookshelf.
2. The pencils on the table are ours.
3. Your backpacks are in the beige aluminum closet.