

## Accurate Apostrophe Use

To correctly use the apostrophe, follow these five steps.

- 1. Look for possessive construction.** When two nouns appear together often first noun shows ownership of, or a special relationship to, the second noun.  
the girl's car  
one month's time  
the employees' duties
- 2. Reverse the nouns using a prepositional phrase.** Examine the ownership word. Does it end in an "s" sound?  
car of the girl (ownership word, *girl*, does not end in an "s" sound)  
time of one month = (ownership word, *month*, does not end in an "s" sound)  
duties of employees (ownership word, *employees*, does end in an "s" sound)
- 3. If the ownership word does NOT end in an "s" sound, add an apostrophe and "s."**  
car of the girl (ownership word does not end in an "s") = girl's car  
time of one month (ownership word does not end in an "s") = one month's time
- 4. If the ownership word DOES end in an "s" sound, usually add only an apostrophe.**  
duties of employees (ownership word ends in an "s") = employees' duties  
rent of six months (ownership word ends in an "s") = six months' rent
- 5. If an extra syllable can be easily pronounced in the possessive form, add an apostrophe and "s" to singular nouns.** Relatively few words and some names (proper nouns) fall in this category.  
desk of the boss = boss's desk (extra syllable can be pronounced)  
office of Agnes = Agnes's office (extra syllable can be pronounced)

Try your skill in transforming words into the possessive case in the following. Write the correct form in the space provided. Write C if the sentence is correct.

1. All of our customers e-mail addresses are now updated.
2. Some of our customers prefer not to receive e-mail messages.
3. In only ten months time, you can expect a profit.
4. The IRSs goal is to simplify tax form language.
5. All applicants must pay a years rent in advance.
6. The managers position was eliminated.
7. My boss office is exceedingly neat.
8. Harvard is Americas richest university.
9. Our companys annual report is available online.
10. Many artists paintings are displayed at the exhibit.
11. The profits of all organizations are being affected by developing technologies and worldwide competition.
12. How far do you think five dollars worth of gasoline will take us?
13. To validate a contract, both parties signatures are necessary.
14. Security officers checked all fans packages at two checkpoints.
15. Mario and Juanas daughter is applying to law schools.