

UNIT 79 ...'s (apostrophe s) and ... of ...

a We normally use 's when the first noun is a person or an animal:

the manager's office (*not* 'the office of the manager')
Mr Evans's daughter **the horse's tail** **a policeman's hat**

Other (with things) we normally use ... of ...:

the door of the room (*not* 'the room's door')
the beginning of the story (*not* 'the story's beginning')

Sometimes you can use 's when the first noun is a thing. For example, you can say:

the book's title *or* **the title of the book**

But it is safer and more usual to use ... of ... (but see also section b).

b You can usually use 's when the first noun is an organisation (= a group of people). So you can say:

the government's decision *or* **the decision of the government**
the company's success *or* **the success of the company**

It is also possible to use 's with places. So you can say:

the city's new theatre **the world's population**
Britain's system of government **Italy's largest city**

c After a singular noun we use 's. After a plural noun (which end in -s) we use only an apostrophe ('):

my sister's room (*one sister*) **Mr Carter's house**
my sisters' room (*more than one sister*) **the Carter's house** (*Mr and Mrs Carter*)

If a plural noun does not end in -s, we use 's:

a children's book

- **Ton's flat is much larger than Ann's.** (= Ann's flat)

d You can also use 's with time words (*tomorrow* etc.):

- **Tomorrow's meeting has been cancelled.**
- **Have you still got last Saturday's newspaper?**

You can also say: *yesterday's... today's... this evening's... next week's... Monday's... etc.*

We also use 's (or only an apostrophe (') with plural) with periods of time:

- I've got **a week's** holiday.
- I've got **three weeks'** holiday.
- I need **eight hours'** sleep a night.
- My house is very near here - only about **five minutes'** walk.

Compare this structure with 'a three-week holiday' (Unit 78f).

Jack and Jill's wedding.....**Mr and Mrs Carter's house**
- I've got **three weeks'** holiday.

