

Possessive pronouns and adjectives

Possessive adjectives are words like my, our, your, his, her, their and its.

Just like other adjectives, they modify nouns. Examples are given below.

This is my car. Which is your car?

He takes his dog wherever he goes.

She stays with her brother's family.

Possessive pronouns are words like mine, ours, yours, his, hers and theirs. Possessive pronouns can be used alone when the meaning is clear.

This is my son. Where is yours? (= Where is your son?)

I have handed in my assignment. Have you handed in yours? (= Have you handed in your assignment?)

My hair is black. Yours is grey.

Possessive pronouns can act as the subject or object of the verb. Possessive adjectives cannot be used like this. Also they cannot stand alone. They are always followed by a noun.

Possessive nouns

In English, we make possessive nouns in two different ways. The first method is to use apostrophe + s.

Examples are given below:

John's father is an architect.

Mary's grandmother is eighty.

We can also make possessive forms by using a structure with of. This method is mainly used when the noun refers to an inanimate object.

Examples are:

The leg of the table

Possessive pronouns and adjectives

The colors of the rainbow

The wheels of the car

In very informal English, you will hear expressions like 'the table's leg' and 'car's wheels'.

However, these kinds of expressions should be avoided in formal and academic writing.