

Possessives with of

We cannot usually use a possessive word before another determiner and a noun. We can say my cat, their cat, a cat or that cat, but not a my cat or that my cat. Instead we use a structure with of + possessive.

Word order: determiner + noun + of + possessive

He is a friend of mine. (NOT He is a my friend.)

She is a colleague of my father's. (NOT He is a my father's colleague.)

Have you heard this new idea of the boss's?

He got the President's Award for a painting of his.

A cousin of mine serves in the army.

He is a cousin of the Minister.

Own is commonly used in a similar structure.

I wish I had a car of my own. (= I wish I had a car of mine.)

They have an apartment of their own in the city. (= They have an apartment of theirs in the city.)

The of + possessive structure is sometimes used to express slight contempt or indignation.

That cat of yours has drank up all the milk.

Those dirty fingers of yours have stained my walls.

That boy of yours has broken my window again.