

# Punctuation Basics - Part 2

## How to use apostrophes and hyphens

### PUNCTUATION SHORTCUTS:

**Apostrophes:** show something belongs to someone (possession) or that letters are missing (omission).

**Hyphens:** combine separate words to show they are working together.



#### Start Here

In Part 1, we looked at commas and periods. Now, let's take a look at hyphens and apostrophes. Or should that be apostrophe's?

**Apostrophes** (') and **hyphens** (-) are two of the most common (and feared) punctuation marks. But there are a few simple rules you can follow to get them right!

1



There are two ways to use apostrophes.

The first is to show **possession**.

To do this, you add an apostrophe and an "s".

"Bob's new song is the cat's pajamas!"

The song belongs to Bob and the pajamas belong to the cat.



4

**Hyphens** are mostly used to join separate words to show they are working together as **compound words**.



"Jim is the guy with dirty-blond hair"

has a very different meaning to

"Jim is the guy with dirty, blond hair."

The hyphen makes it clear the two words are working as one adjective and aren't referring to cleanliness!

3

An apostrophe can also signal **omission** – that letters are left out.

For example:  
"you are" becomes "you're."



"I'm sure we can help out."

"That'll be expensive"

2

However, if a name already ends with an "s" it's common to simply add an apostrophe on its own.

"Agnes' car is upside down."



To learn more Punctuation Basics, read the article at:  
[www.mindtools.com/punctuation-basics2](http://www.mindtools.com/punctuation-basics2)