



# Its and It s.

Its and It s are often confused. This handout explains the difference between them, and shows where and when you should and should not be using them.

First, this short handout explains its (without an apostrophe), which is a possessive pronoun, and compares possessive pronouns with possessive nouns. Secondly, it explains it s (with an apostrophe), which is a contraction. Both possessive nouns and their contractions are included purely to clarify the distinction regarding when and how they are used.

It is important to note that you should not use possessive nouns do have an apostrophe belonging to. It does not have to be a physical object.

Examples:

- Michael's car broke down yesterday. (The car belongs to Michael.)
- It was Janet's turn to lead the meeting. (The meeting was led by Janet.)

## It s

The apostrophe indicates that this is a contraction that stands for it is or it has. The apostrophe replaces the missing letters.

Examples:

- It's snowing again. This is a contraction of it is.
- Have you seen my jacket? It's disappeared. This is a contraction of it has.
- It's probably true that most pop stars are Autotune. This is a contraction of it is.

If you would like an ASK tutorial please contact us:

Email: [academicskills@port.ac.uk](mailto:academicskills@port.ac.uk)  
Phone: 02392843462  
Visit: Third Floor, Nuffield Building  
Resource revised 2019.

