**Apostrophe Rules Breakdown**

**Possessive Apostrophes**

1. An ’s at the end of a word makes the word possessive in these instances:

* Singular words, even when they end in –s (e.g. that bird’s, Harry’s, the iris’s)
* Plural words that do not end in –s (e.g. those syllabi’s)
* Compound words (e.g. mother-in-law’s )
* Nouns that have joint possession of an object (e.g. Anna and Jake’s class)

1. Plural nouns that end in –s only need an apostrophe at the end of the word.

* The puppies’ mother
* Those are the rabbits’ carrots!

**Contraction Apostrophes**

1. When two words are combined into one, this is called a contraction. To create a contraction, place an apostrophe where the omitted letters have been left out.

* who is 🡪 who’s (not to be confused with the possessive form of who: whose)
* should not 🡪 shouldn’t
* it is 🡪 it’s (not to be confused with the possessive form of it: its)

1. There are other instances when an apostrophe represents omitted information. These types of abbreviations are especially common in slang. When placing your apostrophe, consider where letters (or numbers) are missing from the original word.

* 1940s 🡪 the ‘40s
* Rock and roll 🡪 Rock ‘n’ roll
* Because 🡪 ‘cause; Playing 🡪 Playin’; More 🡪 Mo’

**Plural Apostrophes**

1. Apostrophes **never** pluralize a word. However, they do pluralize lowercase letters.

* more than one p 🡪 p’s
* more than one s 🡪 s’s

1. Apostrophes are not necessary for pluralizing capital letters, numbers, or symbols, though they are acceptable when pluralizing capital letters—it is simply a matter of preference.

* What do all these #s on Twitter represent? #confusion!
* We need some more 2x4s to finish the treehouse.
* I got straight As on my report card! (OR) I got straight A’s on my report card!

\*Note: Whether or not you prefer to use the apostrophe to pluralize capital letters, **stay consistent!** Pick the format you prefer, and stick with it! Don’t switch back and forth between writing Cs and C’s, Qs and Q’s, and so on—it will only confuse your readers.