Grammar Worksheets:  Apostrophe Errors, Answers and Teaching Tips

<http://www.grammar-worksheets.com>

1. If you think your going to the movies, your mistaken!

**Answer:** If you think **you’re** going to the movies, **you’re** mistaken!

**Better Answer:** If you think **you are** going to the movies, **you are** mistaken!

**Teaching Tip:** Remember, this is not a comprehensive lesson on apostrophes. This worksheet covers errors that are common in the writing of high school and college students. Sometimes we tell students to write the way they speak. Formal written English has typographical conventions that spoken English does not.

No one would raise an eyebrow if this sentence were SPOKEN, but the conventions (use of apostrophe) of standard written English dictate that we use the ‘re.

As a “rule of thumb”: Encourage your students NOT to use contractions in formal academic writing, unless they are writing dialogue or consciously using an informal tone.

2. The boy who's dog was sent to the pound cried uncontrollably.

**Answer:** The boy **whose** dog was sent to the pound cried uncontrollably.

**Teaching Tip:** Interestingly, some students tell me that they have never heard (or seen) the word “whose,” which is the possessive form of who. What throws students is that they associate the apostrophe with the possessive, so many of them believe that adding an apostrophe to who makes it possessive. Have them write: “who’s means who is or who has.”

3. A good dog always cleans its’ food bowl.

**Answer:** A good dog always cleans **its** food bowl.

**Teaching Tip:** This is a very common error. Emphasize to students that its’ DOES NOT EXIST in standard written English. Its’ is ALWAYS wrong. The word its indicates possession and the contraction it’s means “it is.”

4. The Sisters of Saint Joseph support they're convent with outside employment.

**Answer:** The Sisters of Saint Joseph support **their** convent with outside employment.

5. Its never as good a deal as the salesperson makes it out to be.

**Answer:** **It’s** never as good a deal as the salesperson makes it out to be.

**Better Answer:** **It is** never as good a deal as the salesperson makes it out to be.

**Teaching Tip:** Again, stress that we AVOID CONTRACTIONS in formal written English.

6. The rugby players promise that their not going to stop playing after August.

**Answer:** The rugby players promise that **they’re** not going to stop playing after August.

**Better Answer:** The rugby players promise that **they are** not going to stop playing after August.

7. Their not going to the carnival, and your not either.

**Answer:** **They’re** not going to the carnival, and **you’re** not either.

**Better Answer:** **They are** not going to the carnival, and **you are** not either.

8. Its never too late to apply, even when the registrar's office closes it's doors.

**Answer:** **It’s** never too late to apply, even when the registrar's office closes **its** doors.

**Better Answer:** **It is** never too late to apply, even when the registrar's office closes **its** doors.

9. Its’ important to realize whose actually using the computers in the lab.

**Answer:** **It’s** important to realize **who’s** actually using the computers in the lab.

**Better Answer:** **It is** important to realize **who is** actually using the computers in the lab.