

# 's (your sister's name) and of ... (the name of the book)

## A

We use **-s** (*apostrophe + s*) mostly for people or animals:

- ☐ **Tom's** computer isn't working. (*not* the computer of Tom)
- ☐ How old are **Chris's** children? (*not* the children of Chris)
- ☐ What's (= What is) **your sister's** name?
- ☐ What's **Tom's sister's** name?
- ☐ Be careful. Don't step on **the cat's** tail.

You can use **-s** without a noun after it:

- ☐ This isn't my book. It's **my sister's**. (= my sister's book)

We do not use **-s** after a long group of words. So we say:

**my friend's** mother

*but* the mother **of the man we met yesterday** (*not* the man we met yesterday's mother)

Note that we say **a woman's hat** (= a hat for a woman), **a boy's name** (= a name for a boy), **a bird's egg** (= an egg laid by a bird) etc.

## B

With a *singular* noun we use **-s**:

my **sister's** room (= **her** room – *one sister*)

**Mr Carter's** house (= **his** house)

With a *plural* noun (sisters, friends etc.) we put an apostrophe (') after **s**:

**my sisters'** room (= **their** room – *two or more sisters*)

**the Carters'** house (= **their** house – *Mr and Mrs Carter*)

If a plural noun does not end in **-s** (for example **men/women/children/people**) we use **-s**:

the **men's** changing room      a **children's** book (= a book for children)

You can use **-s** after more than one noun:

**Jack and Karen's** children      **Mr and Mrs Carter's** house

## C

For things, ideas etc., we normally use **of**:

the temperature **of the water** (*not* the water's temperature)

the name **of the book**      the owner **of the restaurant**

We say **the beginning/end/middle of ... / the top/bottom of ... / the front/back/side of ...**:

**the beginning of** the month (*not* the month's beginning)

**the top of** the hill      **the back of** the car

## D

You can usually use **-s** or **of ...** for an organisation (= a group of people). So you can say:

**the government's** decision      *or*      the decision **of the government**

**the company's** success      *or*      the success **of the company**

We also use **-s** for places. So you can say:

**the city's** streets      **the world's** population      **Italy's** prime minister

## E

We use **-s** with time words (**yesterday / next week** etc.):

- ☐ Do you still have **yesterday's** newspaper?

- ☐ **Next week's** meeting has been cancelled.

In the same way, you can say **today's / tomorrow's / this evening's / Monday's** etc.

We also use **-s** (or **-s'** with plural words) with periods of time:

- ☐ I've got **a week's holiday** starting on Monday.
- ☐ Julia has got **three weeks' holiday**.
- ☐ I live near the station – it's only **ten minutes' walk**.

# Exercises

**81.1** In some of these sentences, it is more natural to use **-s** or **'s**. Change the underlined parts where necessary.

- 1 Who is the owner of this restaurant? OK
- 2 How old are the children of Chris? Chris's children
- 3 Is this the umbrella of your friend? .....
- 4 Write your name at the top of the page. ....
- 5 I've never met the daughter of James. ....
- 6 How old is the son of Helen and Andy? .....
- 7 We don't know the cause of the problem. ....
- 8 I don't know the words of this song. ....
- 9 The friends of your children are here. ....
- 10 What is the cost of a new washing machine? .....
- 11 The garden of our neighbours is very small. ....
- 12 The hair of David is very long. ....
- 13 I work on the ground floor of the building. ....
- 14 I couldn't go to the party of my best friend. ....
- 15 George is the brother of somebody I knew at college. ....
- 16 Have you seen the car of the parents of Ben? .....
- 17 What is the meaning of this expression? .....
- 18 Do you agree with the policy of the government? .....

**81.2** Which is right?

- 1 Don't step on the cat's tail. (cat / cat's / cats')
- 2 It's my ..... birthday tomorrow. (father / father's / fathers')
- 3 Those ..... look nice. Shall we buy some? (apples / apple's / apples')
- 4 ..... clothes are expensive. (Children / Children's / Childrens')
- 5 Zurich is ..... largest city. (Switzerland / Switzerland's / Switzerlandds')
- 6 Your ..... parents are your grandparents. (parents / parent's / parents')
- 7 I took a lot of ..... when I was on holiday. (photos / photo's / photos')
- 8 This isn't my coat. It's ..... (someone else / someone else's / someone elses')
- 9 Have you read any of ..... poems? (Shakespeare / Shakespeare's / Shakespeares')

**81.3** Read each sentence and write a new sentence beginning with the underlined words.

- 1 The meeting tomorrow has been cancelled.  
Tomorrow's meeting has been cancelled.
- 2 The storm last week caused a lot of damage.  
Last .....
- 3 The only cinema in the town has closed down.  
The .....
- 4 The weather in Britain is very changeable.  
.....
- 5 Tourism is the main industry in the region.  
.....

**81.4** Use the information given to complete the sentences.

- 1 If I leave my house at 9 o'clock and drive to the airport, I arrive at about 11.  
So it's about two hours' drive from my house to the airport. (drive)
- 2 If I leave my house at 8.40 and walk to the centre, I get there at 9 o'clock.  
So it's ..... from my house to the centre. (walk)
- 3 I'm going on holiday on the 12th. I have to be back at work on the 26th.  
So I've got ..... (holiday)
- 4 I went to sleep at 3 o'clock this morning and woke up an hour later. After that I couldn't sleep.  
So last night I only had ..... (sleep)