

LESSON 13

Possessive Pronouns

A **possessive pronoun** shows who or what owns or possesses something. Possessive pronouns have two forms. When a possessive pronoun stands alone, it acts as a pronoun. When a possessive pronoun is used before a noun, it acts as an adjective.

EXAMPLES

used alone

The house with the red roof is **ours**.
 That birdhouse is **mine**.
Yours has a chip on its roof where you dropped it.

used before nouns

Our house has a red roof.
My birdhouse won a prize at the craft show.
Your birdhouse suffered from its fall.

Possessive Pronouns		
	Singular	Plural
Used alone	mine yours hers, his, its	ours yours theirs
Used before nouns	my your her, his, its	our your their

EXERCISE 1

Identifying Possessive Pronouns in Literature

Identify in the literature passage below the five possessive pronouns used before nouns.

In those first few hours, only the quick-witted managed to escape. Vesonius Primnus, a wealthy wool merchant, called his family together and piled jewelry and money into a sack. Lighting a torch, Vesonius led his little band out into the nightmare of the streets. Overlooked in the confusion was Vesonius’s black

watchdog, chained in the courtyard. The terrified dog barked wildly as lapilli struck and drifting white ash settled around him. The animal struggled with his chain, battling fiercely to get free; but the chain held, and no one heard the dog's cries. The humans were too busy saving themselves.

Many hundreds of Pompeians fled in those first few dark hours. Stumbling in the darkness, they made their way to the city gates, then out, down to the harbor. They boarded boats and got away, living to tell the tale of their city's destruction...

*from "Pompeii," page 202
Robert Silverberg*

EXERCISE 2

Using Possessive Pronouns

For items 1–5, write possessive pronouns to replace some or all of the underlined words in each sentence. For items 6–10, choose the correct word in parentheses to complete each sentence.

1. The players on the softball team and the families of the players had a picnic to celebrate the successful season.

2. The firefighters carrying all the firefighters' equipment had a difficult time climbing the ladder.

3. Our cat and the cat's tiny kittens were snuggled in a corner of the hall closet.

4. If you let me wear your sweater, I'll let you wear my sweater.

5. Our school has more students than your school.

6. Does the camel know (its/it's) feet are strange looking?

7. No other animals have feet quite like (there's/theirs).

8. (Their/They're) perfect for walking on hot sand.

9. You would need to wear shoes or sandals on (your/you're) feet in the desert.

10. (It's/Its) hard to imagine a camel wearing shoes!

EXERCISE 3

Using Possessive Pronouns in Your Writing

Imagine that a sixth-grader from another country is coming to your school next year as an exchange student. Since the student will be living with your family, you have been asked to write a letter to make him or her feel more at home. In your letter, you might include details about your house, family, and pets, your neighborhood, the school and its staff, and your special interests and hobbies, such as music and sports. Use at least five different possessive pronouns in your letter. Use your own sheet of paper for this exercise.