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Hi. My name is Katie. And today, we'll discuss apostrophes and the possessive form. Today's lesson will focus on apostrophes, and we'll begin by describing two different uses for apostrophes in academic writing. Then we'll talk about how you can use these apostrophes within the text of your essay by looking at some examples.

Let's begin by describing what an apostrophe is. This little guy here is an apostrophe. And you'll find them in English writing in a few different ways. The first type we'll talk about is the apostrophe of possession. This is when you find the apostrophe-s to show ownership. The second is the apostrophe of omission, when apostrophes are used to indicate something being taken out.

When you're applying possessive apostrophes, like the apostrophe-s up here, this means that you're indicating ownership. Generally you just add one of these little apostrophe-ses onto the end of something to indicate possession. Here are some examples of how it works.

This phrase is actually one that I used to tease an Italian friend of mine about. Because romance languages change the morphology of words to show possession, their rough English translations come out looking like this sentence. "I borrowed the vacuum of Katie." My friend Claudia, when translating one day, forgot this nuance of translation and stated that she had borrowed the vacuum of Katie instead of smoothly translating it as "I borrowed Katie's vacuum."

Let's look further into the uses of the possessive apostrophe using this next sentence. "I borrowed a vacuum from Katie and Steve." Now, this is one that stumps even people who are native speakers of English. Because people are often unsure on where to place the apostrophe-s. Do they both get it? Does the first one get it? Does the second one get it?

And the answer to that is you borrowed Katie and Steve's vacuum. That means it belongs to both of us. But you only have to put the apostrophe-s at the end of the second term. This sentence also deals with a vacuum that's owned by more than one person. So if you wanted to say, "I borrowed a vacuum from the people," you again just add the apostrophe-s onto that plural noun.

However, if you have a plural noun that ends in an s, such as, "I borrowed the vacuum from the Sutttons," you would have complete s overload if you added an apostrophe-s to this. And the S at the beginning of Sutttons only highlights this s overload even further. So instead, you would just write "I borrowed the Sutttons' vacuum," and the s is just assumed after that apostrophe there. Your reader knows what it means. You don't need to add another s.

However, if you're working with a singular noun that ends in s, like, "I borrowed a vacuum from Atticus," then you do add the apostrophe-s. And you just have to cope with the fact that you have a whole lot of s's crammed into one little space.

Now let's talk about how to use apostrophes to indicate omission. This means you use one of these little guys to signal to the reader that you've taken some letters out. Here's our first example.

"I cannot make the same mistake twice." It's a perfectly fine sentence, but that's not how we speak, and it could disrupt your reader's flow of comprehension and therefore be a distracting element in your essay. So instead of writing "cannot," you could just write "I can't." Here the apostrophe signals that you've taken out an n and an o and improves your reader's comprehension.

Similarly, "I did not want to make the same mistake twice" can be contracted into "I didn't want to make the same mistake twice." This example here is pulled from Nella Larsen's text, *Passing*. I picked it because one of the most notable features about this text is the way that she captures realism in the dialect of her characters. And if you didn't know that apostrophes could be used to indicate where words had been truncated or contracted, you wouldn't even be able to understand this book much less appreciate this artistic quality.

So here we have "he married me 'cause he knew I'd slave for him." We know that the word indicated with apostrophe-cause is supposed to be "because." But Larsen took out that "b" part in order to emulate the way that she imagined her character would speak. The use of the apostrophe in "I'd" right here is another example of a contraction. In this case, it's "I would."

Here's another example from *Passing*. Larsen writes "ain't nothin' gonna make me quit lovin' dis chile." "Dis chile" doesn't require apostrophes because she's not actually taking letters out. Instead, she's phonetically writing words as she hears them in the accented speech of her characters. However, "nothin'" and "lovin'" are perfect examples of using apostrophes to indicate dialect. Because this character doesn't really care to enunciate at the end of her Gs.

One final aspect of using apostrophes that we need to cover is reviewing the way that apostrophes are applied to dates. In this sentence-- it's true-- "my sister and I were born in the 1980's but my brother wasn't born until 1990, I need to remove an apostrophe. Here we have "my sister and I were born in the 1980s but my brother wasn't born until 1990." You don't need an apostrophe-s after a date like that.

Using an apostrophe-s after dates or after titles like PhD is an outdated requirement, and it's no longer considered standard format. However, if you're writing a date like this, you do need an apostrophe. Here you have "my sister and I were born in the '80s." This indicates that I've truncated the word, the same way that Larson used apostrophes to affect her dialect.

We assume that 19 comes before the '80s, because if my sister and I had been born in the 1780s, I certainly wouldn't be recording this tutorial for you today. That's why we colloquially refer to things as the '80s, and that is how we signal to our readers in writing that we are aware that we've truncated some portion of the term.

In today's lesson, we discussed apostrophes and the possessive form. First, we talked about how there were two different types of apostrophes, one to indicate possession and one used that indicates omission. Then we took a close look at nuances of applying possessive apostrophes, such as how to apply them to plural terms. And then we looked at a variety of uses for indicating omission with apostrophes, such as contractions, dialect, and dates.

You can find all this information in a grammar guide, but hopefully this explanation and these examples were helpful. Thank you very much for joining me today.