

## UNIT 73 Possessive case (*Tom's friend, A friend of Tom's*)

To indicate the possession of something, affiliation or kinship, we use the possessive case.

### A

The possessive case is formed by placing the noun that refers to the possessor before the object that they possess (without any article!) and by adding 's to the possessor when the possessor is:

- a singular noun.

*the bag of the teacher → the teacher's bag*

*the garden of my neighbour → my neighbour's garden*

*the twin sister of Samantha → Samantha's twin sister*

- a plural noun that doesn't end in -s.

*the children's toys*

Only the apostrophe is added when the possessor is a plural noun that ends in -s.

*the students' dorms*

*the Smiths' flat*

When the possessor consists of a proper noun or a surname that ends in -s, 's usually added.

*the diary of James → James's diary*

*the house of Ms Jones → Ms Jones's house*

Sometimes, however, with historical names or surnames of famous characters that end in -s, only the apostrophe is added: *Jesus' birth, Dickens' works*

NB: If the same object belongs to two or more people:

*Rita and Betty's room* (they share the room)

BUT: *Rita's and Betty's rooms* (they each have their own room)

### B

The possessive case is used when the possessor is a person (**Tom's cousin**), also expressed with an indefinite pronoun (**someone's birthday**) or an animal (**the dog's kennel**). It isn't usually used when we talk about something belonging to a thing (**the pages of the book** or **the book pages**, not: ~~the book's pages~~).

### C

Besides indicating possession, affiliation and kinship, the **possessive case** is used:

- with names of shops, restaurants, professional studies, churches..., often only keeping the 's and implying the noun **shop, store, restaurant, surgery, cathedral...**

*I visited St Peter's when I was in Rome.*

*Tomorrow, I'm going to the dentist's / to the doctor's. (also possible: to the dentist / to the doctor)*

- to say 'at someone's house', implying **house**.

*We went to Peter's (house) yesterday.*

- with expressions of time.

*today's / yesterday's newspaper, two weeks' holiday (or a two-week holiday), three hours' walk (or a three-hour walk)*

### D

Look at the following construction: **a friend of Sarah's**. Also possible is: **one of Sarah's friends**, but no: ~~a Sarah's friend~~, because it isn't possible to put the article, nor other determiners, before the possessive case.

This construction is called '**double genitive**', as both the preposition **of** and 's are present.

Look at also: *some ties of my father's* (also possible: some of my father's ties, but not: ~~some my father's ties~~.)

Student's notes .....

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## EXERCISES

### Possessive case UNIT 73

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ student code \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

LEVEL: \_\_\_\_\_ CEFR \_\_\_\_\_ TIME: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

#### 73.1 Rewrite the expressions with the possessive case.

- 1 the toy of the dog .....
- 2 the guitar of the boy .....
- 3 the twin brother of Paul .....
- 4 the dresses of the women .....
- 5 the cages of the animals .....
- 6 the computer of your father .....

#### 73.2 Which word could be added? Complete the sentences in a logical way.

- 1 Are you going to your grandparents' ..... tomorrow?
- 2 Did you see St Paul's ..... when you were in London?
- 3 There are lots of patients waiting at Doctor Kerry's ..... today.
- 4 The ambulance is taking them to St Thomas's .....
- 5 There's a good greengrocer's ..... at the corner with Lewis Street.
- 6 We had a great dinner at Louie Linguini's ..... last night.

#### 73.3 Choose the correct alternative (A, B or C).

- 1 I'm going to the ..... tomorrow.  
A doctors B doctors' C doctor's
- 2 I got this meat at the ..... on the corner.  
A butchers' B Butcher's C butchers
- 3 I visited San ..... when I was in Verona.  
A Zeno's B Zenos C Zenos'
- 4 We went to ..... factory yesterday.  
A Harris B Harris' C Harris's
- 5 Where did you eat last night? At ..... restaurant.  
A Fausto B Fausto's C Faustos'
- 6 Did you read last ..... *Observer* magazine?  
A week B week's C weeks'

#### 73.4 Tick (✓) the correct expressions and correct the false ones.

- 1  a colleague of my mother's .....
- 2  a my brother's classmate .....
- 3  some my cousin's books .....
- 4  a relation of my father's .....
- 5  a my sister's team-mate .....
- 6  one my teacher's ideas .....
- 7  an acquaintance of Paul's .....
- 8  yesterday newspaper .....

#### 73.5 Rewrite the underlined expressions in a different way.

- 1 We visited some relations of my wife's last summer. ....
- 2 Why don't you try a bottle of wine of my father's? .....
- 3 These are two of my sister's CDs. .....
- 4 Have you read the issue of this week of Time magazine? .....
- 5 Where is the newspaper of today? .....
- 6 Have you been on holiday for three weeks? .....

Teacher's observations