



## German spelling

### Apostrophe

**rule A01: Put an apostrophe for names of people in the genitive case , which end with s, ß, z , ce or x .**

example(s)



- Lisas Familienname ist Müller.  
(Lisa's surname is Müller.) -> no apostrophe in German
- Ich kenne Thomas' Bruder.  
(I know Thomas's brother.) -> apostrophe in German
- Max's Lehrer ist sehr streng.  
(Max's teacher is very strict.) -> apostrophe in German

exception(s)

An exception are names of people in business, e.g. the names of companies, restaurants and shops, if the basic form of the name is not explicit:

- Andrea's Schneiderei. -> apostrophe because it's not clear if it is Andreas' (male) or Andrea's (female) tailoring.
- Carlo's Pizzeria. -> apostrophe because it's not clear if it is Carlo's or Carlos' pizzeria.
- Willi's Würstchenbude. -> apostrophe possible whereby it's a borderline case because the name Willy is quite explicit.

hint(s)

The "s-genitive" is just used for animate things. You need the rule, if you speak about possession of human beings and animals.

The reason for this typical mistake is because you have to add a "s" to (almost) all nouns to form the plural in English. Many English words were taking over into German and their spelling too.



**rule A02: Put no apostrophe for the plural nouns and abbreviations, also not for nouns taken from English/French.**

example(s)



- Sie sind Profis.  
(They are professionals.) -> no apostrophe in German
- Wir verkaufen Bücher und CDs.  
(We sell books and cds.) -> no apostrophe in German
- Eure Spareribs sind lecker.  
(Your spare ribs are delicious.) -> no apostrophe in German

hint(s)

Hereby it doesn't matter in which case the noun is used. Also for the genitive don't put a comma.

- Der Geschmack der Spareribs ist großartig. (The spare ribs' taste is great.)
- Die Farbe der CDs gefällt mir. (The cds' color is nice.)
- Der Prozessor des PCs ist sehr schnell. (The pcs' processor is fast.)



**rule A03: Put an apostrophe if you leave out letters or words, but not if you join prepositions and articles.**

example(s)



- Wie geht's (=geht es) dir?  
(How are you?) -> apostrophe in German
- Was machst'n (=machst du) gerade?  
(What are you doing?) -> apostrophe in German
- Alles fürs (=für das) Büro.  
(Everything for the office.) -> no apostrophe in German
- Bitte nicht ins (=in das) Gleis werfen.  
(Please don't throw onto the rails.) -> no apostrophe in German

hint(s)

If you leave out letters or whole words, to improve the "sound of the sentence", put an apostrophe.

If you join a proposition (mit, nach, bei, von zu, aus, für, in ...) and an article (der, die, das), don't put an apostrophe.

#### summary

**Remember: There are just situations in German where you have to put an apostrophe:**

- for names of people in the genitive case, which end with s, ß, z, ce or x.
- if you leave out letters or words.