Whose Is It? Using Apostrophes to Show Ownership in Year 2

Key points

- In Year 2, children learn to use an apostrophe and 's' to show that something belongs to someone, such as 'Amir's coat' or 'the dog's bone'.
- This ownership apostrophe is different from the apostrophes in words like 'don't' or 'can't' (called contractions), which children already know.
- The simple rule is: put the apostrophe and 's' right after the person's name or the word for who owns it.
- Before your child adds an apostrophe, they can ask themselves: 'Who does it belong to?' — if they can answer clearly, they've found the right word.
- Seeing apostrophes in everyday life — on labels, in books, on signs — helps children understand that this is a real, useful rule.

Things to try at home

- Point out ownership apostrophes when you spot them together: on a book ('Mia's library book'), a toy, or even a menu at a café.
- Play a simple 'Whose is it?' game with things around the home: 'This is Grandpa's jumper', 'This is the cat's toy'.
- Help your child make a label for their bedroom door or a shelf using the ownership apostrophe — something like 'Jamie's space'.
- Read stories together and ask your child to listen for apostrophes; it helps them hear the pattern in everyday speech.

Find out more

- Your child's teacher — they'll explain which approach the school uses and can answer questions about how they teach this.
- National Curriculum for English, Year 2 (gov.uk) — shows what punctuation children are expected to learn.
- Your local library — ask staff to suggest Year 2-level books that show apostrophes in action.