

Course n° 04 :

Possessive Adjectives and Pronouns

There are many occasions in which we need to refer to something that belongs to a person. For example, in the simple question, “*What’s your name?*” The word ‘your’ lets us indicate whose name we are talking about. There are two ways to describe possession in English – using adjectives and using pronouns. Here are some details to help you understand how to use each and what the difference is.

Possessive Adjectives

We use possessive adjectives to express who owns (or ‘possesses’) something. A possessive adjective is used in front of a noun (a thing). For example:

My computer.

Your pen.

Our car.

The possessive adjectives in English are as follows:

Subject	Possessive adjective
I	My
You (singular)	Your
He	His
She	Her
It	Its
We	Our
You (plural)	Your
They	Their

Here are some examples:

*What’s **your** address?*

***My** car is in front of the school.*

*This is Jack and this is **his** wife, Sue.*

*Put **your** coats on the back of **your** seats.*

***Our** new Maths teacher is very nice.*

*What a beautiful bird! **Its** feathers are bright blue!*

***My** sister is always tired. **Her** job is difficult.*

His and Her

Remember that in English, nouns don't have a gender and are therefore neither masculine nor feminine. So when we use 'his' we mean that the object is 'of a man', and when we use 'her' we mean that the object is 'of a woman'. For example:

Possessive Pronouns

As with possessive adjectives, we use possessive pronouns to indicate who owns something, but with pronouns we don't use a noun. We use possessive pronouns when it is clear which object we are referring to. For example:

*Whose pen is this? It's **mine**.* (meaning 'my pen')

Here are all the possessive pronouns:

Subject	Possessive pronoun
I	Mine
You (singular)	Yours
He	His
She	Hers
It	Its
We	Ours
You (plural)	Yours
They	Theirs

As you can see, the pronouns 'his' and 'its' are the same as the adjectives, while the others change by adding an -s, with the exception of 'mine'. Here are some examples:

*That's Anna's homework and this is **yours**.*

*Your hotel is near the city center while **ours** is near the airport.*

*I love your sofa. **Mine** isn't as comfortable as **yours**.*

*We don't need help with our project but the boys need help with **theirs**.*

*Is this Carol's bicycle? – No, that red one over there is **hers**.*

*Whose game is this? – Sam was playing earlier so it must be **his**.*

We also use possessive pronouns after a noun + 'of'. For example:

*I'm a friend of **his**.*

*You're a student of **mine**.*

*She's a colleague of **ours**.*

Here is a chart with both the possessive adjectives and pronouns for you to use as a reference:

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Possessive adjective</u>	<u>Possessive pronoun</u>
I	My	Mine
You (singular)	Your	Yours
He	His	His
She	Her	Hers
It	Its	Its
We	Our	Ours
You (plural)	Your	Yours
They	Their	Theirs

So, now you've seen the difference between possessive adjectives and pronouns, it's time to practice! Try making some of your own examples, especially for the third person singular ('his' and 'her/hers'), by writing some basic information about you, family members and friends. Using these possessive words correctly will really make a big difference to your English fluency!

EXERCISE :

Check Your Understanding of Possessive Adjectives.

Fill in the blanks with appropriate possessive adjectives in the following sentences:

1. Have you met _____ father? Don't I look just like him?.
2. Sid bought a new bike. Did you see _____ new bike?
3. Mazeeka and Gowtham are getting married. _____ wedding reception begins at 5 p.m. tomorrow.
4. We just moved into the locality recently and found that nobody likes _____ neighbour.
5. _____ English teacher asked us to complete the grammar exercises on possessive adjectives before Friday.
6. _____ house in Ooty is a farmhouse. He goes there every summer.
7. Sharanya is leaving tomorrow. Do you know when _____ flight to London is?
8. I have to buy some acrylic colours to finish _____ painting.
9. Did you ask her where _____ husband works?
10. Can you bring _____ certificate file when you come?

Answer :

1. Have you met **my** father? Don't I look just like him?
2. Sid bought a new bike. Did you see **his** new bike?
3. Mazeeka and Gowtham are getting married. **Their** wedding reception begins at 5 p.m. tomorrow.
4. We just moved into the locality recently and found that nobody likes **our** neighbour.
5. **Our** English teacher asked us to complete the grammar exercises on possessive adjectives before Friday.
6. **His** house in Ooty is a farmhouse. He goes there every summer.
7. Sharanya is leaving tomorrow. Do you know when **her** flight to London is?
8. I have to buy some acrylic colours to finish **my** painting.
9. Did you ask her where **her** husband works?
10. Can you bring **my** certificate file when you come?