

It's versus Its

If you find it difficult to use **it's** and **its** correctly, you're not helped by the fact they're used incorrectly all over the place. Maybe one day **its** will disappear, but that time hasn't arrived yet. So, to avoid irritating the reader of your spec material (and some readers do get very irritated by this error), try to use **it's** and **its** in the right places.

It's is the contracted form of *it is* and *it has*. The apostrophe tells us that something is missing, just like in other contracted forms such as *can't* or *don't*.

It's now or never. (It is now or never.)

It's always expensive at this time of year. (It is always expensive ...)

It's been a shock to us all. (It has been a shock to us all.)

If you're unsure, replace the form you've used with *it is* or *it has*. If you still have a sentence that makes sense, you need **it's**.

Now to the trickier **its**, the possessive adjective for *it*.

My copy of *Jane Eyre* has lost its cover.

There was nothing to suggest that its origins were Roman.

The solution was beautiful in its simplicity.

If you make errors here because you associate possessives with apostrophes (*my cat's fur*, *the car's suspension*), remember that **its** is the same part of speech as *my*, *his* and *her*. And you probably never feel the need to put an apostrophe in them.

I watched my wedding ring slip down the drain.

There was a taxi parked outside his house.

Her answers were evasive.

And therefore:

The tree sheds its leaves in the autumn.

You can find more examples on the [Grammar Monster](#) website.