

Character names ending in s or z

One of the joys of creative writing is naming your characters. I've recently proofread a script and a novel where the majority of characters had surnames ending in an s. If you're attracted to names ending in s or z, it's worth reminding yourself how to write those names when you make them possessive or plural. You might find you don't like the way a particular name looks or sounds, and opt to rename your character.

First names first. Here you need an apostrophe plus an s to show the character owns or is using something:

First name	Possessive
Paris	Paris's hoodie is covered in mud
Carlos	Carlos's bike was found in a ditch two weeks later
James	INT. JAMES'S STUDIO - DAY

You can also use an apostrophe on its own after the final s of the name if you feel that's a better reflection of the way you would say it. Taking the examples above, I would say *Paris's hoodie* and *Carlos's bike*, but I find it easier to say *James'* without the final 'ziz' sound because of the s at the start of *studio*.

Make a note of your choice and be consistent in your document.

Now to family names. You'll have to consider both plural and possessive forms:

Family name	Plural (add <i>es</i> to the singular form)	Possessive (add an apostrophe to the plural form)
Rawlings	The Rawlingses leave the house	The Rawlingses' house is now a smouldering wreck
Hernandez	The Hernandezes all bundled into their car	INT. THE HERNANDEZES' CAR - NIGHT

If you're committed to a name but find its plural and possessive forms unwieldy, you could use 'family' to do some of the work:

INT. RAWLINGS FAMILY APARTMENT - NIGHT

That's what the creators of *The Addams Family* did. (*The Addamses*? That just sounds creepy ...)