

Who's versus Whose

Who's and **whose** (like their equally confusable cousins *it's* and *its*) are words that sound the same but do very different jobs in writing.

Who's is a contraction, the shortened form of *who is* or *who has* (in the same way that *it's* is the shortened form of *it is* or *it has*). The apostrophe tells us that something is missing.

Who's going to sort out this mess?

She wants to know who's replied to the invitation.

I recommend the plumber who's fixing my boiler.

I'd recommend the plumber who's fixed my boiler.

Whose is the possessive form of *who* and is used to ask who possesses something:

Whose trainers have been left on the stairs?

Whose stupid idea was that?

Whose is also used in relative clauses to specify or give more information about a person:

Any resident whose rent is in arrears will be evicted.

Nobody believed the boy whose dog had eaten his homework.

Whose can also be used with inanimate objects:

She loved living in a house whose garden was open to the public.

Remember, if you can rewrite your sentence using *who is* or *who has*, you need *who's*:

Who's/who is going to sort out this mess?

I'd recommend the plumber who's/who has fixed my boiler.

Otherwise you need *whose*.