Apostrophe Detectives

Does the apostrophe show belonging or try to make a plural?

4.5.W.6 "Students will use apostrophes to show possession of singular and plural nouns and recognize and remove apostrophes used to form plurals."

NAME _____ DATE _____

SHOWS BELONGING

An apostrophe can show that something belongs to a noun. Add 's to one owner, or add just ' to a plural owner that ends in s.

the baker's apron

TRIES TO MAKE A PLURAL

An apostrophe does not make a noun mean more than one. Remove it when the noun simply names more than one.

six spoon's (should be six spoons)

1 SORT

8 items

For Part 1, circle BELONGS or PLURALS for each item; for Part 2, choose two items and explain how you knew where they belong.

1.	the teacher's desk	BELONGS PLURALS
2.	three kite's	BELONGS PLURALS
3.	five robot's	BELONGS PLURALS
4.	the birds' nests	BELONGS PLURALS
5.	the dog's leash	BELONGS PLURALS
6.	two apple's	BELONGS PLURALS
7.	the players' jerseys	BELONGS PLURALS
8.	four book's	BELONGS PLURALS

2 PROVE IT

Explain your thinking

Pick two items from Part 1. For each one, tell how you knew where it belonged.

ITEM # _____ **HOW I KNEW** _____

ITEM # _____ **HOW I KNEW** _____

3 MAKE YOUR OWN

One of each

For Part 3, write one new example that shows belonging and one new example with an apostrophe that should be removed.

BELONGS _____

PLURALS _____

CHALLENGE

Write one sentence with a plural noun that shows belonging and a different plural noun that needs no apostrophe.

ANSWER KEY

Apostrophe Detectives

GRADE 4 · 4.5.W.6

PART 1 · SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	the teacher's desk	**BELONGS**	The desk belongs to one teacher.
2	three kite's	**PLURALS**	Three kites are being counted, so the apostrophe should be removed.
3	five robot's	**PLURALS**	Five robots are being counted, so the apostrophe should be removed.
4	the birds' nests	**BELONGS**	The nests belong to multiple birds.
5	the dog's leash	**BELONGS**	The leash belongs to one dog.
6	two apple's	**PLURALS**	Two apples are being counted, so the apostrophe should be removed.
7	the players' jerseys	**BELONGS**	The jerseys belong to multiple players.
8	four book's	**PLURALS**	Four books are being counted, so the apostrophe should be removed.

PART 2 · PROVE IT

Accept any explanation that names the deciding feature from the rule box for the chosen item.

PART 3 · MAKE YOUR OWN (SAMPLE ANSWERS)

- **BELONGS**: the rabbit's hutch
- **PLURALS**: seven fork's

Challenge: The dancers' bags held three costumes.

For Part 2, explanations should connect each apostrophe to belonging or explain that it must be removed from a plural. For example, item 1 shows that the desk belongs to the teacher, while item 2 counts three kites and needs no apostrophe.