**PLURALS AND POSSESSIVES**

When a noun or a pronoun is possessive, it shows ownership or a type of relationship over something else:

Lawyer’s files (singular)

When a noun or a pronoun is plural, that means there is more than one person, place, or thing:

Three lawyers’ files (plural)

There are five basic rules for dealing with possessive nouns:

A. Singular Nouns:

When you have a singular noun or a plural noun that does not end in an s, add an apostrophe and an s to the word:

Jim’s office or Evelyn’s dress

Children’s toys or men’s shoes

B. Plural Nouns:

When you have a noun that ends in an s, add only an apostrophe to it. There is no need to add an additional s:

Lawyers’ offices

Companies’ staff members

Dogs’ bones

C. Hyphenated and Compound Nouns:

In this scenario, you add an apostrophe and an s at the end of a hyphenated word or to the last word in a compound noun:

My father-in-law’s court case will be heard on Friday.

Canada Post Corporation’s website is down.

D. Two Nouns:

When you have a situation where two people, places, or things share ownership of something, add an apostrophe and an s to the second noun only:

Jane and John’s house is on the Sixth Avenue.

E. Two Nouns Where Ownership is Separate:

When you have a situation where two people, places, or things indicate ownership, however, the ownerships are separate, each noun gets an apostrophe and an s:

Jim’s and Stan’s cars are both blue.

If you get stuck, try using this rule, which will work in most cases:

Each time you see an “S”, look at the word after it. If that word is a noun, you have a possessive instance:

The lawyer’s files are in the cabinet.

If that word is a verb, you have a plural instance:

The files are in the cabinet.