Confusing "Its" and "It's"

Two of the most commonly confused words are *its* and *it's*.

- **Its** shows possession.
  - The wind showed *its* strength by knocking over a tree.
- **It's** is a contraction for *it is* or *it has*.
  - *It's* a shame that beautiful old tree is gone.

So why are they so easy to mix up? For many writers, the confusion comes from the apostrophe. Because apostrophes can indicate possession, writers may mistakenly include one with *its* to show possession. Be careful to not fall for this trap. With pronouns such as *it's* and *you're*, an apostrophe indicates a contraction, not possession.

Here's a simple trick to avoid confusing the two. Whenever you come across *it's* in writing, read the sentence out loud, but say "it is" instead of *it's*. If the sentence still makes sense, keep the contraction version *(it's)*. If the sentence doesn't make sense, use the possessive version *(its)*.

Your Turn Try out the trick. Read the following examples out loud, saying "it is" in place of *it's*. Which sentence uses *it's* correctly? Which one needs to replace *it's* with *its*?

1. The clock tower rings it's bell every hour.

The clock tower rings it is bell every hour. (incorrect)

2. It's a beautiful, deep sound.

It is a beautiful, deep sound. (correct)

Your Turn Fill in the blank with the correct form: *it's* or *its*. When you're finished, read the sentences out loud using the "it is" trick.

1. The grocery store is known for ___its__ yummy donuts.
2. __Its___ walls are covered with community art.
3. __It's___ a beautiful day outside.
4. To avoid colds, ___it's___ recommended to take vitamin C.
5. My car is missing ___its___ radio antenna.
6. __It's___ hard to tune in any channels.
7. If you want to read my paper, ___it's___ on Google Drive.
8. I could use some help on __its___ ending.
9. __It's___ too choppy right now.
10. When you read my paper, __it's___ okay to leave comments.

- See more at
http://k12.thoughtfullearning.com/minilesson/confusing-%E2%80%9Cits%E2%80%9D-and-%E2%80%9Cit%E2%80%99s%E2%80%9D