Its? It's? Or Its'?

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<http://www.businesswritingblog.com/business_writing/2006/05/its_its_or_its_.html>

Those three little letters cause a lot of confusion, but once you master a couple

of basic rules, the choice becomes simple.

1. *Its'* is never correct. Your grammar and spellchecker should flag it for you. Always change it to one of the forms below.
2. *It's* is the contraction (abbreviated form) of "it is" and "it has." *It's* has no other meanings--only "it is" and "it has."
3. *Its* is the form to use in all other instances when you want a form of i-t-s but you are not sure which one. *Its* is a possessive form; that is, it shows ownership the same way *Javier's* or *Santosh's* does.

Example: The radio station has lost *its* license.

The tricky part of the *its* question is this: If we write "Javier's license" with an apostrophe, why do we write "its license" without an apostrophe?

Here is the explanation: *Its* is like *hers, his, ours, theirs,* and *yours.* These are all pronouns. Possessive pronouns do not have apostrophes. That is because their spelling already indicates a possessive. For example, the possessive form of *she* is *hers.* The possessive form of *we* is *ours.* Because we change the spelling, there is no need to add an apostrophe to show possession. *Its* follows that pattern.

*Its* used correctly*:*

You can recognize Rene's music by its abrupt tempo changes. The golden retriever is known for its gentle personality.

Golfing has lost its appeal for Gene because of his arthritis.

Test yourself. Decide which form is correct in these sentences.

1. **Its / It's** easy to get to the ballpark by car or bus.
2. This restaurant is known for **its / it's** emphasis on regional cooking.
3. **Its / It's** become very difficult to find parking near the library since it moved from **its / it's** Maple Street location.

Remember: When the word is a contraction of "it is" or "it has," the correct choice is *it's.* Otherwise, the correct choice is *its.*

Correct answers:

1. The word is a contraction in this sentence, so the correct form is *it's.*
2. The phrase "it is" doesn't make sense in this sentence, which needs a possessive form: *its.*
3. The sentence begins with a contraction of "it has" *(it's)* and then needs a possessive form *(its).*

I hope my explanation of *its / it's* works well for you. Just remember: *Its'* is

*never* correct.