One of the many pitfalls in grammar is possession. Often, possessive forms make use of the apostrophe and the "'s" suffix... but is it different between singular and plural possession? How are they formed? Where is the apostrophe? If you find yourself lost in the thick of things, don't panic just yet...

The singular possessive form has a single subject with the apostrophe before the suffix (e.g. "dog's toys").

The plural possessive form has a plural subject with the apostrophe after the suffix (e.g. "dogs' toys").

Is there just one owner of this object?

YES: The apostrophe goes before the "s"!

NO: Move down and ask...

WHOSE "'" IS IT ANYWAY?

Move up and reconsider... :NO

The apostrophe goes after the "s" :YES

...that turns out to be a contraction! In fact, "its" is the possessive form, not "it's". How can we tell? Well, we might consider the apostrophe as the dot above an invisible 'i'...

but there is also

THE SCARIEST POSSESSIVE IN THE WORLD...

IT'S

The letter

(apostrophe)

Knowing the difference between
ITS & IT'S

"It", like other pronouns, doesn't have an apostrophe in its possessive form! If there is an apostrophe, it's always a contraction.

"it's" is more than just a party trick*, however: knowing the correct possessive form goes a long way toward making your essay presentable!

*The exceptions being "you're" and "you've", which do have apostrophes in their possessive forms, but you will never use at least one of them possessives in an elegant essay.