The Important Apostrophe: Their, They’re, and There

The words *their*, *they’re*, and *there* are often confused. They sound the same, but they have entirely different meanings. *Their* is possessive, showing something that belongs a group of people: they. *They’re* is a contraction of the words *they are*. The apostrophe shows that the letter ‘a’ is missing. *There* is an adverb that shows a location or a pronoun that works at the beginning of a phrase or sentence.

**Tip:** To know which word is correct, try the sentence using the words *they are*. If the sentence makes sense, then they’re is the correct usage. If the sentence does not make sense, see if the the sentence is speaking about something belonging to someone or something. In that case use their. If the sentence is talking about a location, use there. If the word is used with a form of the verb to be, such as *is, are, were or was*, you also use there.

**Part I.** Read each sentence below. If *their, they’re or there* is used correctly in the sentence, circle **right** in the blank. If *their, they’re or there* is not used correctly, circle **wrong**.

1. The band likes to play their original songs.  
   right  wrong
2. They’re flying kites in the park.  
   right  wrong
3. There is a monster in the closet.  
   right  wrong
4. No one likes there secrets told.  
   right  wrong
5. Sophie asked if they’re would be clowns at the circus.  
   right  wrong
6. There best ideas were written on the whiteboard.  
   right  wrong
7. Don’t go there.  
   right  wrong
8. They’re are many reasons to learn a foreign language.  
   right  wrong

**Part II.** In the blanks below, write the correct word: *their, they’re or there*.

1. The family likes to eat ______________________________ dinner early.  
2. Do you know if ______________________________ in the cafeteria?  
3. If you go to New York City, you will see many tall buildings ____________________ .  
4. Let me know when ______________________________ ready to leave.  
5. Everyone should be on ______________________________ best behavior.  
6. ______________________________ the best neighbors in the world.  
7. They will tell you if ______________________________ are pieces missing.  
8. My dogs often sleep in ______________________________ doghouse.
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Tip: To know which word is correct, try the sentence using the words *they are*. If the sentence makes sense, then *they’re* is the correct usage. If the sentence does not make sense, see if the sentence is speaking about something belonging to someone or something. In that case use *their*. If the sentence is talking about a location, use *there*. If the word is used with a form of the verb to be, such as *is*, *are*, *were* or *was*, you also use *there*.

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Part II. In the blanks below, write the correct word: *their*, *they’re* or *there*.

1. The family likes to eat ___________ dinner early.  
2. Do you know if ___________ in the cafeteria?  
3. If you go to New York City, you will see many tall buildings ___________.  
4. Let me know when ___________ ready to leave.  
5. Everyone should be on ___________ best behavior.  
6. ___________ the best neighbors in the world.  
7. They will tell you if ___________ are pieces missing.  
8. My dogs often sleep in ___________ doghouse.