

Unit 49: GENITIVE

We sometimes need to describe a noun by using another noun with it. We use this other noun:

- with the –s ending ('s for singular, s' for plural);
- with **of** before it;
- as an adjective (Unit 64).

1 –S ending

We usually use this:

a for people:

Maria's father	the father of Maria
Ahmed's homework	homework which Ahmed must do
I went to Bill's	the place where Bill lives
this student's ability	ability which this student has
a girls' school	a school for girls
a children's playground	a place where children can play
an old people's home	a place where old people live

NOTICE: Plurals without **s** use 's (NOT s').

b for **nouns of time:** today's program
three weeks' holiday
a few minutes' rest

NOTICE: The noun with the –s ending goes before the noun it describes.

2 Of

We use this with most other nouns. For example:

the corners of the room	NOT <i>the room's corners</i>
the end of the game	NOT <i>the game's end</i>
the history of Canada	
the capital of Alberta	

NOTICE: The noun with **of** goes after the noun it describes.

3 Adjective

We usually use this when we are talking about a type of something.

car doors	NOT <i>car's doors</i>
plane ticket	NOT <i>plane's ticket or ticket of a plane</i>
English lessons	NOT <i>English's lessons</i>
music school	NOT <i>music's school</i>
hotel room	NOT <i>hotel's room</i>

NOTICE:	a teacup	=	a cup you can use for tea
	a cup of tea	=	a cup with tea in it
	a shopping bag	=	a bag you can use for shopping
	a bag of shopping	=	a bag with shopping in it

4 -s ending and of

Normally we say **Maria's cousin** or **John's book** or **my father's friends**, especially if we have already mentioned the cousin or the book or the friends. But if we want to be more indefinite, and especially if we are mentioning them for the first time, we say:

a cousin **of Maria's** a book **of John's** some friends **of my father's**

We can also use personal pronouns (Unit 50) this way:

an uncle **of mine** (I am not telling you which one.)

BUT the second noun must describe a person. We say:

a corner **of the room** NOT *a corner of the room's*

And we must know which person. We say:

a student's book NOT *a book of a student's*