

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

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