Module 1 Unit 1
Grammar: Apostrophes

Summary
You use apostrophes to show that:
• a longer form is contracted to a shorter form, (e.g. has not - hasn’t); or
• the noun with the apostrophe owns or possesses what comes immediately after it (e.g. the car’s engine).

Apostrophes do not indicate that a word is plural.
When the apostrophe comes before the s (’s) it shows that:
• the noun is singular and possesses what comes after it (e.g. the engine’s capacity); or
• the noun is plural and possesses what comes after it, but is an irregular plural (e.g. Some people’s lives).

When the apostrophe comes after the s (s’), it shows that the noun is plural AND possesses what comes after it (e.g. the workers’ complaint).
It’s is always a contraction of it is.
Its always shows possession.
Its’ simply does not exist!

You should not use contractions in academic writing. If you avoid it’s altogether and use it is, you will never make a mistake with apostrophes.