Figure It Out!

_Mi coche es nuevo y _el tuyo _es viejo._
_Nuestra casa es grande y _la vuestra _es pequeña._
_Sus hijos son altos y _los nuestros _son bajos._
_Tus decoraciones son creativas y _las mías _son aburridas._

In the previous four sentences that compare and contrast the characteristics of certain nouns, what do the underlined words have in common with each other? What do the double underlined words have in common with each other? What are the similarities and differences between the underlined words and the double underlined words? What patterns do you see regarding how they are used?

Introduction

¡Dentífrico! Whose? Mine, yours, or his? **Possessive pronouns** and **possessive adjectives** help to clarify this. In Spanish, they agree in gender and number with the nouns that they take the place of or modify.

Demonstrative Pronouns

Pronouns take the place of nouns. So, what are **possessive** pronouns?

Possessive pronouns do two things. First, since they are pronouns, they are used "for" nouns. That is, they take the place of nouns. Second, since they are possessive, they show who owns what or what belongs to whom. For example, "Mine is better than yours." And don't forget that they must agree with the nouns that they replace. That is, they agree in gender and number with the thing possessed and NOT with the person who possesses it. Just make sure, though, that you use the one that correctly refers to the person who has the object. ¡Sí, sí, señor!

Let's compare the English possessive pronouns with the Spanish possessive pronouns. What differences and similarities do you see between the two sets of possessive pronouns below?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ENGLISH POSSESSIVE PRONOUNS</th>
<th>SPANISH POSSESSIVE PRONOUNS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mine</td>
<td>el mío</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ours</td>
<td>la mía</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>los míos</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>las mías</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yours</td>
<td>el tuyo</td>
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<td></td>
<td>la tuya</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>los tuyos</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>las tuyas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>your/his/hers/its</td>
<td>el suyo</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>la suya</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>los suyos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>las suyas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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For every English possessive pronoun there are four in Spanish:
- Masculine Singular
  - el mío, el tuyo, el suyo, el nuestro, el vuestro, el suyo
- Feminine Singular
  - la mía, la tuya, la suya, la nuestra, la vuestra, la suya
- Masculine Plural
  - los míos, los tuyos, los suyos, los nuestros, los vuestros, los suyos
- Feminine Plural
  - las mías, las tuyas, las suyas, las nuestras, las vuestras, las suyas

In Spanish, the possessive pronoun refers to the person and number of the possessor of the object and it agrees in gender and number with the noun it replaces. Also, it is accompanied with a definite article that shows the same agreement.

- Mi libro es grande. El suyo es pequeño.
  - (My book is big. His/Hers/Your/Their/Their/Yours is small.)
- Tu mochila es roja. La mía es negra.
  - (Your backpack is red. Mine is black.)
- Sus zapatos son feos. Los suyos son bellos.
  - (His/Hers/Your/Their/Your shows are ugly. His/Hers/Your/Your/Your/Yours are pretty.)
- Nuestras plumas son buenas. Las vuestras son malas.
  - (Our pens are good. Yours are bad.)

The definite article is usually omitted when the possessive pronoun comes after the verb ser:

- El carro grande es el mío.
  - (The big car is mine.)
- La bicicleta pequeña es la tuya.
  - (The small bicycle is yours.)
- Los bolígrafos nuevos son los suyos.
  - (The new pens are his/hers/your/your/their/their/your/your/Yours.)
- Las plumas rojas son las nuestras.
  - (The red pens are ours.)

Since the 3rd person forms can be ambiguous, the context usually helps identify the possessor.

- Mi hermano no tiene su bicicleta hoy. La suya está rota todavía.
  - (My brother doesn't have his bike today. His is still broken.)

However, the definite article can be used before the noun followed by a propositional phrase, such as de él, de ella, de mis hermanos, etc., to add further clarity.

- La bicicleta de mi hermano está rota todavía.
  - My brother's bike is still broken. –OR– "The bike of my brother is still broken."
You CANNOT use a possessive pronoun without having previously mentioned the noun that it is replacing. Otherwise, no one will understand the thing to which you are referring.

- *Mi coche es muy viejo y el tuyo es nuevo.*
  - (My car is very new and *yours* is new.)
- Note that the possessive pronoun *el tuyo* replaces the noun *coche* after it is mentioned in the first part of the sentence (or paragraph).

In summary, to use the correct Spanish possessive pronoun, you must choose the correct form from 24 possibilities. For example, if you want to use the possessive pronoun for "ours," which is the 1st person plural, then you must choose from *el nuestro, la nuestra, los nuestros, or las nuestras.* To choose correctly between one of these four possibilities, you must now choose the one that agrees in gender and number with the object that is possessed. If the object is *casa,* which is feminine singular, then you would choose *la nuestra* because that one is the only one that is also feminine singular.

The following table summarizes how you would select the correct possessive pronoun.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th>SPANISH POSSESSIVE PRONOUNS</th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st Person</td>
<td>Masculine</td>
<td>el mío</td>
<td>Singular</td>
<td>Plural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feminine</td>
<td>la mía</td>
<td>Singular</td>
<td>Plural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Person</td>
<td>Masculine</td>
<td>el tuyo</td>
<td>Singular</td>
<td>Plural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feminine</td>
<td>la tuya</td>
<td>Singular</td>
<td>Plural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Person</td>
<td>Masculine</td>
<td>el suyo</td>
<td>Singular</td>
<td>Plural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feminine</td>
<td>la suya</td>
<td>Singular</td>
<td>Plural</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

First, determine the form that refers to the person and number of the possessor.

Second, select one of the four forms that agrees in number and gender with the object that is possessed.

**Possessive Adjectives**

Adjectives modify or describe nouns. So, what are possessive adjectives?

Possessive adjectives are used to show ownership. That is, they modify nouns by showing who owns what or what belongs to whom. For example, "My team is better than your team." Unlike possessive pronouns, which replace the noun, possessive adjectives must accompany the noun. And don't forget that they must agree in person and number with the nouns that they modify. That is, they agree in gender and number with the thing possessed.
and NOT with the person who possesses it. Also, the 1\textsuperscript{st} person and 2\textsuperscript{nd} person plural (nosotros and vosotros) forms also agree in gender. ¡Sí, sí, señor!

Let's compare the English possessive adjectives with the Spanish possessive adjectives. What differences and similarities do you see between the two sets of possessive adjectives on the next page?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ENGLISH POSSESSIVE ADJECTIVES</th>
<th>SPANISH POSSESSIVE ADJECTIVES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>my</td>
<td>nuestro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>nuestra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>your</td>
<td>tu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>your/his/her/its</td>
<td>vosotros</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>vuestra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>su</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the two side-by-side tables above, you should have noticed the following:

For four of the six English possessive pronouns there are two in Spanish:
- Singular
  - \textit{mi, tu, su, su}
- Plural
  - \textit{mis, tus, sus, sus}

For two of the six English possessive pronouns there are four in Spanish:
- Masculine Singular
  - \textit{nuestro, vuestro}
- Feminine Singular
  - \textit{nuestra, vuestra}
- Masculine Plural
  - \textit{nuestros, vuestros}
- Feminine Plural
  - \textit{nuestras, vuestras}

In Spanish, the possessive adjective refers to the person and number of the possessor of the object and it agrees in number, and in gender with the \textit{nosotros} and \textit{vosotros} forms only, with the noun it modifies.
- \textit{Mi} coche es nuevo.
  - (My car is new.)
- \textit{Tu} casa es grande.
  - (Your house is big.)
- \textit{Sus} zapatos son de moda.
  - (Her/His/Your/Their/Your shoes are in style.)
- \textit{Nuestro} problema es difícil.
  - (Our problem is difficult.)
• **Vuestras** comidas son deliciosas.
  • *(Your* foods are delicious.)

• **Su** cita salió muy bien.
  • *(Her/His/Your/Their/Your* date went well.)

Since the 3<sup>rd</sup> person forms can be ambiguous, the context usually helps identify the possessor.

• *Mi hermano no tiene su bicicleta hoy.*
  • *(My brother doesn't have his bike today.)*

However, the definite article can be used before the noun followed by a propositional phrase, such as *de él, de ella, de mis hermanos*, etc., to add further clarity.

• *La bicicleta de mi hermano está rota todavía.*
  • *My brother's bike is still broken. –OR– "The bike of my brother is still broken."*

The possessive adjective must ALWAYS be followed by the object that is possessed. In other words. The possessive adjective always **PRECEDES** the object that is possessed.

• **Nuestra** tarea es muy interesante.
  • *(Our homework is very interesting.)*

A possessive pronoun may be converted and used as a possessive adjective. Just drop the article and place the new the possessive **AFTER** the noun it modifies.

• *El corazón **mío** está quebrado.*
  • *(My heart is broken.)*

• *Este libro **tuyo** es interesante.*
  • *(This book of **yours** is interesting.)*

• *La comida **suya** es deliciosa.*
  • *(Her food is delicious.)*

• *El trabajo **nuestro** es peligroso.*
  • *(Our job is dangerous.)*

• *Las canciones **vuestras** son bellas.*
  • *(Your songs are beautiful.)*

• *Los problemas **suyos** son difíciles.*
  • *(Their problems are difficult.)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>CONVERTED SPANISH</strong></th>
<th><strong>POSSESSIVE ADJECTIVES</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>mío</strong></td>
<td><strong>nuestro</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>mía</strong></td>
<td><strong>nuestra</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>míos</strong></td>
<td><strong>nuestros</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>mías</strong></td>
<td><strong>nuestras</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>tuyo</strong></td>
<td><strong>vuestro</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>tuya</strong></td>
<td><strong>vuestra</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>tuyos</strong></td>
<td><strong>vuestros</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>tuyas</strong></td>
<td><strong>vuestras</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>suyo</strong></td>
<td><strong>suyo</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>suya</strong></td>
<td><strong>suya</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>suyos</strong></td>
<td><strong>suyos</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>suyas</strong></td>
<td><strong>suyas</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The possessive adjective is replaced by a definite article (*el, la, los, las*) when showing possession of articles of clothing and with parts of the body because the owner of these things is understood.

• *Me puse el suéter.*
  • *(I put on my sweater.)*

• *Me duele la cabeza.*
  • *(My head hurts.)*

In summary, to use the correct Spanish possessive adjective, you must choose the correct form from 14 possibilities. For example, if you want to use the possessive pronoun for "**their,**" which is the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular, then you must choose between **su** and **sus.** To choose correctly between one of these two possibilities, you must now choose the one that
agrees in number with the object that is possessed. If the object is *plumas*, which is plural, then you would choose *sus* because that one is the only one that is also plural.

So, in order to correctly use possessive adjectives you must do the following:

First, determine the form that refers to the person and gender of the possessor.

Second, select one of the two (or four) forms that agrees in number (and gender) with the object that is possessed.

This table summarizes these two steps on selecting the correct possessive adjective.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Spanish Possessive Adjectives</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Singular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Person</td>
<td>Masculine</td>
<td><em>mi</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td><em>mis</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Person</td>
<td>Masculine</td>
<td><em>tu</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feminine</td>
<td><em>tus</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Person</td>
<td>Masculine</td>
<td><em>su</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Practice Exercises

To check your understanding of possessive pronouns and possessive adjectives, do the following exercises.

A. Sentence Combination

Combine the following sentences into one sentence using de to indicate possession.

Example: El profesor tiene un automóvil. Es azul.
El automóvil del profesor es azul.

1. __________________________ Josefinat tiene una blusa. Es bonita.
2. __________________________ Quiero una revista. Esteban tiene una revista.
3. __________________________ La señora García lleva un sombrero. Es cómico.
4. __________________________ El banco tiene una caja fuerte. Es grande.
5. __________________________ Los Rodríguez manejan un carro. Es nuevo.
6. __________________________ María quiere la nota. Su primo tiene la nota.
7. __________________________ Quiero unos discos. Mi hermano tiene discos.
8. __________________________ Mi mamá tiene unos zapatos. Son viejos.
9. __________________________ Mi abuela tiene un gato. Es blanco.
10. __________________________ Quiero un refresco. Coca Cola es un refresco.

B. Sentence Completion: Possessive Adjectives

Complete each sentence using the appropriate form of the possessive adjective. Pay careful attention to the gender and number of the noun it modifies.

1. (Nuestro) __________ escuela está en la calle José Antonio.
2. ¿Es (su) __________ medicina?
3. ¿Son nuevos (tu) __________ pantalones?
4. (Su) __________ sillón no es cómodo.
5. (Nuestro) __________ maletas están en el baúl del automóvil.
6. Señor, ¿es (su) __________ asiento?
7. ¿Dónde están (mi) __________ anteojos?
8. ¿De qué color es (nuestro) __________ automóvil nuevo?
9. Juan no puede encontrar (su) __________ papeles.
10. Llevo (mi) __________ mochila en la espalda cuando camino a la escuela.
11. (Nuestro) __________ amigos juegan en el equipo nacional.
12. ¿Son de cuero (tu) __________ sandalias?
13. Pongan Uds. (su) __________ bicicleta aquí.
14. (Mi) __________ paraguas está al lado de la puerta.
15. (Nuestro) __________ clase de biología es interesante.
16. ¿Dónde están (vuestro) __________ parientes?
17. (Tu) __________ televisor no es de colores.
18. Mis padres llevan (su) __________ niños a la iglesia en (su) __________ automóvil.
19. (Mi) __________ programas favoritos son los de deportes.
20. ¿Dónde vive (vuestro) __________ tía? ¿En Barcelona o Valencia?
C. Answering Questions: Possessive Adjectives

Following are questions and answers. Fill in the correct possessive adjective to answer the questions below.

1. ¿Tienen Uds. una tabla de surfing?
   - Sí, __________ tabla es amarilla brillante.

2. ¿Josefina, tengo yo un paraguas en el ropero?
   - No, __________ paraguas está perdido.

3. ¿Tienes plumas con tinta azul?
   - Sí, __________ plumas tienen tinta azul.

4. ¿Tienen Carlos y Pilar un perro dócil?
   - No, __________ perro no es dócil.

5. ¿Tiene Ud. un estereo caro o barato?
   - __________ estereo es carísimo.

6. ¿Tiene la muchacha una muñeca rota?
   - Sí, __________ muñeca está rota.

7. ¿Tenéis vosotros barbas largas?
   - Sí, __________ barbas son largas.

8. ¿Tienes profesores exigentes?
   - Sí, __________ profesores son muy exigentes.

9. ¿Tienen Uds. alfombras orientales en su salón?
   - No, __________ alfombras son de la India.

10. ¿Tenéis vosotros una familia simpática?
    - Sí, __________ familia es muy simpática.

D. Sentence Completion: Possessive Pronouns

Complete each sentence with the appropriate form of the possessive indicated. Pay careful attention to the ending of the possesive pronoun. It agrees with the thing possessed, not the possessor.

1. La blusa era (suyo) __________.
2. Unos amigos (nuestro) __________ jugaban en el equipo nacional.
3. El cuaderno de práctica era (mío) __________.
4. ¿Es (tuyo) __________ esta mantilla?
5. Las rosas (vuestro) __________ en la mesa son hermosísimas.
6. El reloj (suyo) __________ funciona bien bajo el agua.
7. Unas amigas (nuestro) __________ vienen esta noche a la fiesta de cumpleaños.
8. El collar de diamantes (tuyo) __________ era más brillante que el (mío) __________.
9. Señores, el equipo (suyo) __________ no jugó bien anoche.
10. Querida (mío) __________, te adoro.
E. Answering Questions: Possessive Pronouns

Answer each question using the appropriate form of the possessive pronoun.

1. ¿Es peligroso el perro de usted? Sí, _________ es peligrosísimo.

2. ¿Dónde está nuestro hotel? _________ está en la otra calle.

3. ¿Compró tu mamá tu ropa? Sí, compró _________.

4. ¿Es éste el peine de Pilar? No, _________ está enfrente de su espejo.

5. ¿Son éstas las llaves de papá? No, _________ están en casa.

F. Writing Exercise

Write six sentences using either possessive pronouns or possessive adjectives. Think about some objects that you own and some that other people own as you are writing.

1. _____________________________________________________________________

2. _____________________________________________________________________

3. _____________________________________________________________________

4. _____________________________________________________________________

5. _____________________________________________________________________

6. _____________________________________________________________________