Possession, or to whom something belongs, is often shown using the word *de*.

In English, an apostrophe is normally used with the letter ‘s’ to show ownership or possession. For example, if the car belonged to Mary, we would say “Mary’s car.”

A less common way of showing possession in English is to use this construction: “the _____ of _____” as in “the car of Mary.”

Since you can’t use an apostrophe with the letter ‘s’ in Spanish to show possession, you have to use the second construction from above, using the word *de*.

For example:
- John’s book (You can’t do this in Spanish.)
  
  *el libro de Juan*

- the book of John
  
  *la casa de la niña*

- the girl’s house (You can’t do this in Spanish.)
  
- the house of the girl

The two phrases above mean the same thing, but only the second one is allowed in Spanish.

**Note:** A contraction is formed when *de* and *el* are next to each other.

*de* + *el* = *del*

For example:
- the boy’s car
  
  *el carro de el chico*

- the man’s lunch
  
  *el almuerzo de el hombre*