Possessives: Should the Apostrophe be Before or After the “s”? (’s vs. –s’)

The apostrophe is largely used to show possession, but when it comes to words with an “s” at the end, sometimes the placement gets confusing. Luckily, it’s relatively easy to know whether or not the apostrophe comes before or after the “s.”

The apostrophe comes after the “s” if the word is plural.

The students’ papers were graded very harshly.

Since we are talking about more than one student, the apostrophe goes after the “s.”

The apostrophe comes before the “s” if the word is singular.

The student’s paper was graded very harshly.

Here, there is only one student being talked about, so the apostrophe goes before the “s.”