Turkish Language Recipe Cards

Separator Consonants

Turkish words are made of fragments strung together. Double vowels sometimes appear inside a fragment (example, *saat hour/time*) but are not allowed when joining two fragments together.
There are three options when two vowels come together between fragments. Drop the first vowel. Drop the second vowel. Or, insert a separator consonant. This page is about separator consonants.

There are three separators. *-s- -y-* and *-n-*

-s- is the most restricted. It is used only with the possessed ending for his/her/its. The possessed ending is *-i* with its i-type harmony variants *-ı, -ü, -u*. The possessed ending is used with a possessor, or as the second word in a compound noun (see separate page).
Example: *araba car araba-s-ı his car Ali'-n-in araba-s-ı Ali's car*
The exception to the use of *-s-* is *su-y-u Maden su-y-u Mineral water.*

-y- is used for the accusative (definite object), when the normal ending is *-i* (variants *-ı -ü -u*). Example (object of sentence): *kedi cat kedi-y-i the cat*.
-y- is used for the dative (to/towards) cases of nouns, when the normal ending is *-e* (variant *-a*). Example (dative): *Ankara'-y-a To Ankara*
-y- has another use to separate two vowels in some tenses of verbs and personal endings. Examples: *git-me-y-eceğ-im I will not go. Iyi-y-im I am fine. Birlikte-y-iz We are together.*
And, finally, *-y-* is sometimes required to separate a vowel from a <u>consonant</u>.
Example (before consonant): *taksi-y-le by taxi* (lit. together with a taxi)

-n- is the all-purpose remaining separator. It is used for everything else in its own right. Example (possessor ending): *Ali'-n-in Ali's*
-n- also takes over from either *-s-* or *-y-* when there has been one fragment ending in a word already.
Example (replacing *-y-*): *Topkapı Saray-ı'-n-ı Topkapi Palace* (as sentence object) and *Topkapı Saray-ı'-n-a To Topkapi Palace* because *Topkapı Saray-ı* (lit. Topkapi, its-Palace) already has one ending *-ı* as a compound noun.
And, finally, *-n-*, like *-y-*, can be needed to separate a consonant from a vowel.
Example (before consonant): *Arka-s-ı-n-da Behind* (lit. at/on it's behind)