

A Parent's Guide to Apostrophes

In English writing, the apostrophe is used when writing contractions and for demonstrating possession. The activities in this booklet focus on using the apostrophe for contraction – when two words have been shortened and one or more letters have been omitted. For example:

They've is the contraction of they have.

In this example, they have has been contracted to make one word. The apostrophe demonstrates where letters have been omitted.

Note: When practising using apostrophes in contractions, please ensure that your child places the apostrophe in the correct position, i.e. exactly between the letters where the omission has occurred. For example, in the contraction he'd (he would or he had) the apostrophe falls between the 'e' and the 'd'. If the apostrophe is placed above the e or the d, this would be incorrect usage of the apostrophe.

he'd	correct
h'ed	incorrect
hed'	incorrect

Common Contraction Words

Here is a list of common contracted words and their expanded forms. Please use this guide to help when practising how to spell contractions.

shouldn't	=	should not	isn't	=	is not
aren't	=	are not	wasn't	=	was not
wouldn't	=	would not	weren't	=	were not
couldn't	=	could not	hasn't	=	has not
doesn't	=	does not	hadn't	=	had not
haven't	=	have not	don't	=	do not
they're	=	they are	mustn't	=	must not
they'll	=	they will	who's	=	who is
they've	=	they have	what's	=	what is
that's	=	that is	where's	=	where is
can't	=	cannot	won't	=	will not
we're	=	we are	she's	=	she is or she has
we've	=	we have	he's	=	he is or he has
we'll	=	we will	you'll	=	you will
I'll	=	I will	you're	=	you are
I've	=	I have	who'll	=	who will
it's	=	it is or it has	didn't	=	did not