Apostrophes in Contractions

1. Focus

Explain Apostrophes in Contractions

Say: A contraction is a shortened version of a word or pair of words. Letters are removed from the words that form the contraction, and a punctuation mark called an apostrophe goes in their place. For example, we can shorten the words could not to the contraction couldn’t. We remove the letter o in not, put the two words together, and add an apostrophe where the o was. Let’s look at some more examples of apostrophes in contractions.

Model Using Apostrophes in Contractions

Display the modeling text on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources. Read the text aloud to students.

“Can’t you work faster, Chang? I’m tired of snow.”

Modeling Text

Say: The words Can’t and I’m are contractions. (Underline Can’t and I’m.) Contractions aren’t always made from two words. Can’t is a shortened version of cannot, which is one word. But the rest of the process of forming the contraction is the same. We remove the letters n and o and use an apostrophe in their place. The word I’m is a shortened version of I am. The apostrophe in I’m replaces the letter a in am. These two sentences are words spoken by a character in a historical fiction story. By using contractions, the author makes the dialogue sound more like the way a person would actually speak.

Objectives

In this mini-lesson, students will:

• Determine the purpose of apostrophes in contractions.
• Identify apostrophes in contractions.
• Use apostrophes in contractions.

Preparation

Materials Needed

• Chart paper and markers
• Apostrophes in Contractions (BLM 10)
• Interactive whiteboard resources

Advanced Preparation

If you will not be using the interactive whiteboard resources, copy the modeling text and the practice text onto chart paper prior to the mini-lesson. If necessary, copy the sentence frames from “Strategies to Support ELs” on chart paper.
2. Rehearse

Practice Using Apostrophes in Contractions

Display the practice text on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources.

Ask students to work with a partner to identify the contractions and what the apostrophe in each contraction replaces in the practice sentences. (Students do not need to copy the sentences.)

1. If they didn’t get through the mountain soon, the project would be delayed.
2. Chang wasn’t in the cabin or outside.
3. They were digging out men who’d been trapped inside the tunnel.

**Practice Text**

If your class includes English learners or other students who need support, use “Strategies to Support ELs.”

**Share Sentences with Apostrophes in Contractions**

Invite pairs to share their results. Discuss their responses. Ask the following questions:

- What is the contraction in the sentence?
- What letter or letters does the apostrophe replace?
- How would the sentence sound different if it used *did not, was not,* or *who had* instead of the contraction?

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

**Say:** We learned contractions are a shortened version of words or pairs of words. Apostrophes in contractions replace the missing letters. Use contractions when you write historical narratives to make your writing sound more natural, like the way we speak.

If you would like to give students additional practice using apostrophes in contractions, have them complete BLM 10.

4. Share

Bring students together. Invite volunteers to read aloud their answers to BLM 10. Provide corrective feedback as necessary. Ask students to review what they learned about apostrophes in contractions.

**Strategies to Support ELs**

**Beginning**

Use the words in common contractions, such as *I am, cannot,* and *who is,* in simple sentences to communicate the words’ meaning. (For example: *I am the teacher.*) Write the sentences on chart paper. Model for students the process of forming the contraction by crossing out the omitted letters and adding an apostrophe in their place. Repeat with other examples of common contractions.

**Intermediate and Advanced**

Pair ELs with fluent English speakers to complete the practice activity. Provide the following sentence frames to help students talk about apostrophes in contractions:

*The contraction is ______.*
*The apostrophe replaces the letter/letters ______.*