

# 10. CONTRACTIONS

Combine each of the underlined pairs of words into one word. Then write that word in the space provided:

1. We are not going to the movies after all. \_\_\_\_\_
2. I have not seen him in a long time. \_\_\_\_\_
3. I am determined to get my degree. \_\_\_\_\_

## Definition

The words that you formed above—*aren't*, *haven't*, and *I'm*—are called **contractions**. A **contraction** is a word that is formed by shrinking two words into one. To make a contraction, you must remove one or more letters and add an apostrophe to the place where the letters have been removed. The apostrophe tells you exactly where the missing letters once stood.

Writers generally use contractions in informal or creative writing. It is a good idea to avoid using them in formal essays or compositions. Here are some more examples of contractions:

- |               |           |
|---------------|-----------|
| 1. they are   | they're   |
| 2. she is     | she's     |
| 3. could not  | couldn't  |
| 4. we have    | we've     |
| 5. should not | shouldn't |
| 6. will not   | won't*    |

When you are forming a contraction, be sure to put the apostrophe in the place where the letters have been removed. Also, be sure not to confuse the contractions *it's* (it is) and *you're* (you are) with the possessive pronouns *its* (*its* head) and *your* (*your* car).

\*As you probably noticed, *won't* is an unusual contraction. To form it, you must change some letters as well as drop some.

**HINT**

If a word is a contraction, you should be able to change it into two words and still have a good sentence:

- |                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| 1. It's a girl.           | It is a girl. (makes sense)                        |
| 2. I saw its tail.        | I saw it is tail. (does <i>not</i> make sense)     |
| 3. You're a great player. | You are a great player. (makes sense)              |
| 4. I like your shirt.     | I like you are shirt. (does <i>not</i> make sense) |

## CONTRACTION EXERCISES

A. *Directions:* Turn the italicized words in each sentence into a contraction and write it in the space provided at the end.

EXAMPLE: I *do not* like sheep. don't

1. I *would not* kiss you if you were the last frog on Mars. \_\_\_\_\_
2. *They are* not going to New Zealand this year. \_\_\_\_\_
3. You know *that is* not what I meant. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Maria *will not* finish the book on time. \_\_\_\_\_
5. I *would* love to be a painter some day. \_\_\_\_\_
6. *They have* lived in this town for years. \_\_\_\_\_
7. Does that mean *you would* see it? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Bernice *cannot* go on the fact-finding mission to South America. \_\_\_\_\_
9. The astronauts *are not* flying to the moon in May. \_\_\_\_\_
10. *They will* have to see the ballet another time. \_\_\_\_\_

B. *Directions:* Rewrite the following contractions as two words.

EXAMPLE: isn't is not

1. wasn't \_\_\_\_\_
2. I'd \_\_\_\_\_
3. you've \_\_\_\_\_
4. shouldn't \_\_\_\_\_
5. I've \_\_\_\_\_
6. let's \_\_\_\_\_
7. didn't \_\_\_\_\_
8. you'd \_\_\_\_\_
9. I'm \_\_\_\_\_
10. hasn't \_\_\_\_\_

C. *Directions:* Circle the contractions if the apostrophe is not placed correctly. On the blank next to the word, write the letters that are left out. Put the apostrophe in the right place.

EXAMPLE: (w'ere)    a    we're

- |            |       |              |       |
|------------|-------|--------------|-------|
| 1. they'll | _____ | 7. he'll     | _____ |
| 2. are'nt  | _____ | 8. shouldn't | _____ |
| 3. she's   | _____ | 9. we'll     | _____ |
| 4. they're | _____ | 10. was'nt   | _____ |
| 5. wo'nt   | _____ | 11. you'll   | _____ |
| 6. youv'e  | _____ | 12. ther'es  | _____ |