

Contraction Activities

Activities range from beginning levels such as what contractions are and how to create them to advanced levels such as how to use different types of contractions to enhance creative writing. Be sure to scroll down if you have older students.



Contraction Rules

Contractions are made by combining two words. One of the words is usually a pronoun or an auxiliary verb, and the other word is a main verb or a negation.

An apostrophe is used to show where letters have been removed to form the contraction. For example, "I am" becomes "I'm" and "does not" becomes "doesn't."

Contractions are often used in informal writing and conversation but are less common in formal writing.

The apostrophe replaces the missing letters that were removed when forming the contraction. For example, "cannot" becomes "can't" because the "no" is replaced by the apostrophe.

Some contractions are formed by combining two words that end and begin with the same letter. For example, "she is" becomes "she's" and "we will" becomes "we'll."

Contractions are usually pronounced with a shorter vowel sound than the full words. For example, "can't" is pronounced with a shorter "a" sound than "cannot."

There are some irregular contractions that don't follow these rules. For example, "ain't" is a contraction for "am not," "are not," "is not," "has not," or "have not."

Teaching Idea #1 – Picture Books

Contraction Activities for the Classroom



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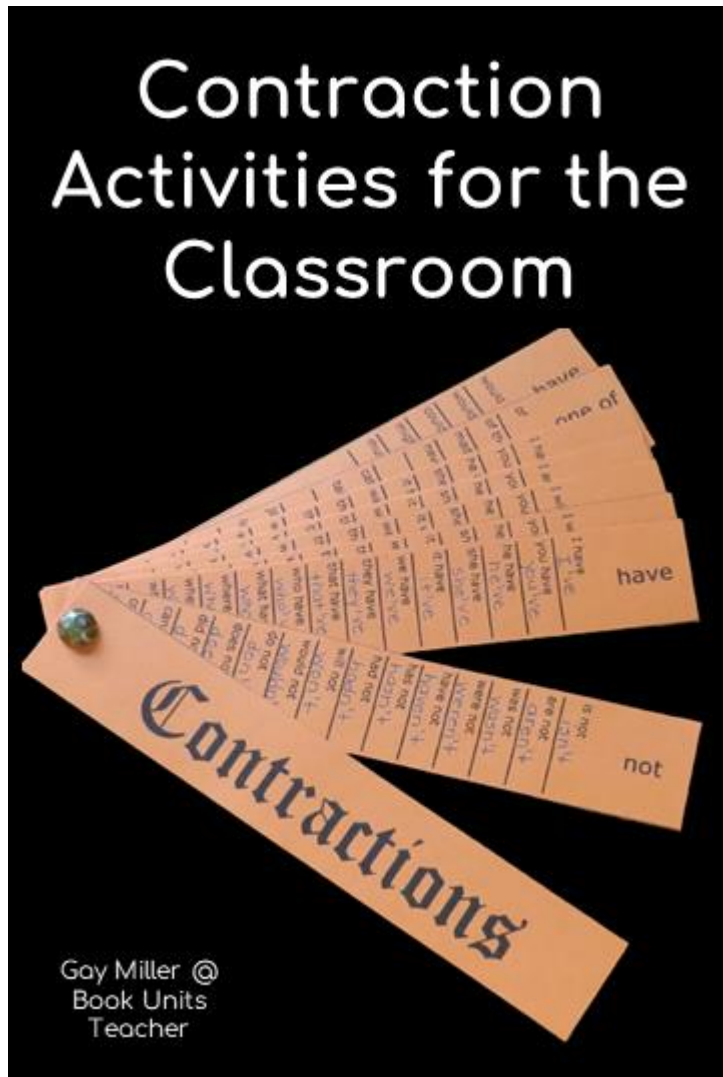
Using books is a great hook activity for a contraction lesson.

Here are two titles you might like:

I'm and Won't, They're and Don't: What's a Contraction? by Brian P. Cleary

If You Were a Contraction (Word Fun) by Trisha Speed Shaskan

Teaching Idea #2 – Fan Organizer



Contraction Activities for the Classroom

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If contractions are something you regularly teach, you probably have a variety of contraction-matching activities. I've seen really cute matching activities for just about every holiday or theme imaginable. So... to be a little different, I have included a fan graphic organizer for your lesson. The graphic organizer contains the following contractions:

- not
- be
- will
- would
- have
- had
- one-of-a-kind contractions such as of-the-clock and Jack-of-the-Lantern

Print the pages on cardstock. Cut the strips apart. Have the students write contractions for each word. When completed, connect the strips with a brad. This creates a fan organizer. Students can store these in an interactive notebook. They make a great quick check guide for spelling contractions correctly.

NOTE: The final two parts of the fan organizer are repeated 3 times to save paper when printing. Take note of this so you do not end up with too many copies of the final parts.

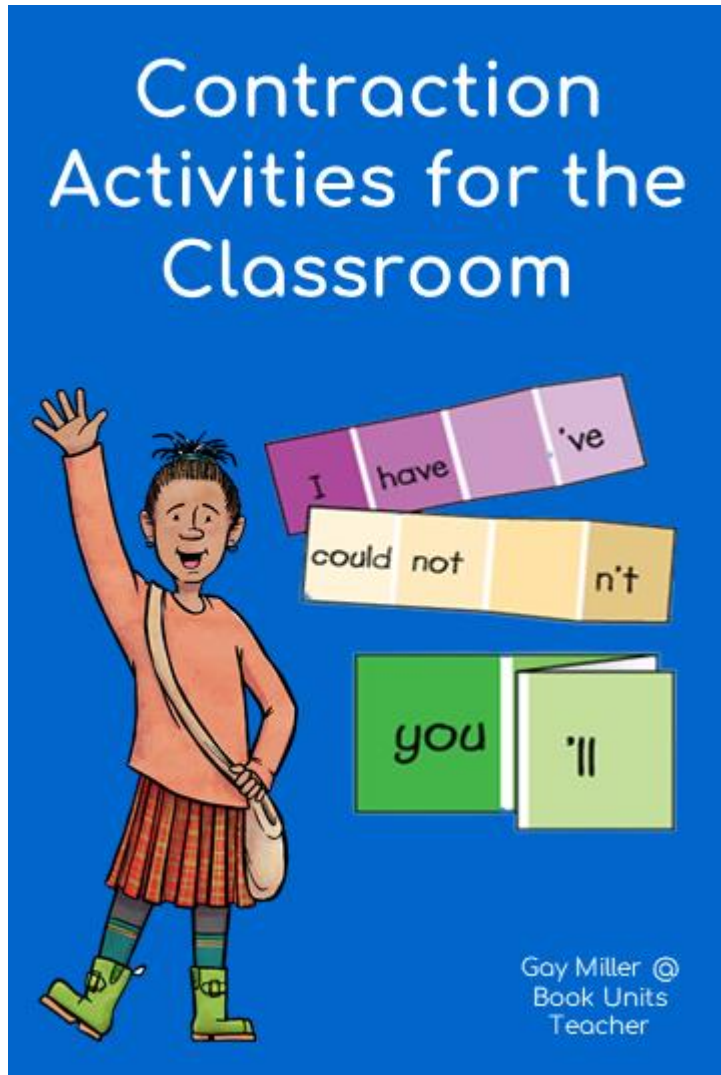
Contractions

o												
o	not	is not are not was not were not have not has not had not will not would not do not does not did not cannot could not	be	I am you are he is she is it is we are they are that is who is what is where is when is why is how is	will	I will you will he will she will it will we will they will that will who will what will where will when will why will how will	would	I would you would he would she would it would we would they would that would who would what would where would when would why would how would	have	I have you have we have they have that have who have what have where have when have why have how have	had	I had you had he had she had it had we had they had that had who had what had where had when had why had how had

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have	one of a kind	have	one of a kind	have	one of a kind
would have	of the clock	would have	of the clock	would have	of the clock
could have	madam	could have	madam	could have	madam
might have	never-do-well	might have	never-do-well	might have	never-do-well
must have	cat-of-nine-tails	must have	cat-of-nine-tails	must have	cat-of-nine-tails
	jack-of-the-lantern		jack-of-the-lantern		jack-of-the-lantern
	it was		it was		it was

To save copies this page repeats. Print one page for every three students.

Teaching Ideas #3 - Teaching Materials and Ideas from the Web



[Education.com](#) has a series of free printables to help teach contractions.

Lisa Elliot posted this great idea. [Using Paint Clips to make Organizers](#) looks like colorful fun.

Common Core Corner created this [free activity](#). Students perform surgery by cutting the word cards in half. Next, they cut off unneeded letters. The remaining two halves are taped back together as a contraction.

Learn how to perform [Contraction Surgery](#) from Mandi Moore.

Members of [Super Teacher Worksheets](#) can print out puzzles and games. Non-members can enjoy a printable practice.

Teaching Ideas #4 - Printable and Online Games on the Web



Free
Contraction
Games



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[Where Does the Apostrophe Go?](#) is an online activity that provides hands-on practice.

Caitlyn Jackson created [Contractions for a Rainy Day](#) for your literary centers. These cute matching cards would make a fun memory game.

Teacher's Take-Out created [Contraction Bingo](#). This is great for small groups.

Beth Gorden created [Contraction Dominoes](#). This activity practices with 50 contractions. Great for students in 2nd through 5th grades.

Teaching Ideas #5 – Using Contractions to Enhance Creative Writing



Contractions can be an effective tool for enhancing creative writing by giving a voice to characters and making their speech more realistic and natural.

Here are some ways that contractions can be used to achieve this:

Regional Speech Patterns:

The use or avoidance of contractions can be used to highlight differences in the speech patterns of characters from different regions or backgrounds. For example, a character from the Southern United States might use more contractions than a character from the Northeast, which can help to create a sense of regional dialect.

Conversational Tone:

When character use contractions, they appear more relatable to readers. This can be particularly effective in creating a sense of intimacy between characters or when writing in a more informal style.

Showing Emotions:

Using contractions can indicate sarcasm or convey a sense of uncertainty or hesitancy.

On the next page, you will find a chart with examples to use for class discussion.

Adding Voice to Characters

Contractions can be an effective tool for enhancing creative writing by giving a voice to characters and making their speech more realistic and natural.

Regional Differences

Southern United States: y'all (you all) ain't (am not, is not, are not, has not, have not) gonna (going to) y'all'd've (you all would have) fixin' to (preparing to) dunno (don't know) ain'tcha (aren't you) yonder (over there)	Midwest: ain'tcha (aren't you) coulda (could have) shoulda (should have) woulda (would have) mighta (might have) wanna (want to) hafta (have to) gotta (have got to)
Northeast: yiz (you all) d'ya (do you) whaddya (what do you) kinda (kind of) gonna (going to) coulda (could have) shoulda (should have) woulda (would have)	West Coast: gonna (going to) wanna (want to) gotta (have got to) coulda (could have) shoulda (should have) woulda (would have) ain't (am not, is not, are not, has not, have not) kinda (kind of) sorta (sort of)

Education Levels

<p>In general, people who are more educated or come from higher social classes may use fewer contractions in their speech and writing, while those from less-educated or lower social classes may use more contractions.</p> <p>Example</p> <p>Well-educated person:</p> <p>I do not believe that it is appropriate to use contractions in formal writing.</p> <p>Less-educated person:</p> <p>I don't think it's okay to use contractions in fancy writing.</p>
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Creating Mood or Showing Emotions

Sarcasm Example I just love standing in the rain without an umbrella, it's my favorite thing in the world.
Insincerity Using contractions when formal language should be used shows insincerity.
Sense of Uncertainty or Hesitancy Examples I don't know if I can make it to the party. I'm not sure I'm ready for this.
Vagueness Example I'm kinda, sorta, not really sure what I'm doing.

Conversational Contractions

These contractions are commonly used in informal speech and writing and can help to make the language more fluid and conversational. These are generally not suitable for more formal writing or speaking situations.

o'clock = of the clock

'til = until

ma'am = madam

'tween = between

'fraid = afraid

'spose = suppose

'cept = except

'cause = because

lemme = let me

gimme = give me

gonna = going to

wanna = want to

kinda = kind of

sorta = sort of

outta = out of

lotta = lot of

Irregular Contractions that don't follow the Standard Contraction Rules

ain't = am not / are not / is not / has not / have not

won't = will not

shan't = shall not

daren't = dare not

mighn't = might not

mustn't = must not

needn't = need not

oughtn't = ought not

hain't = has not / have not

I'd = I had / I would

he'd = he had / he would

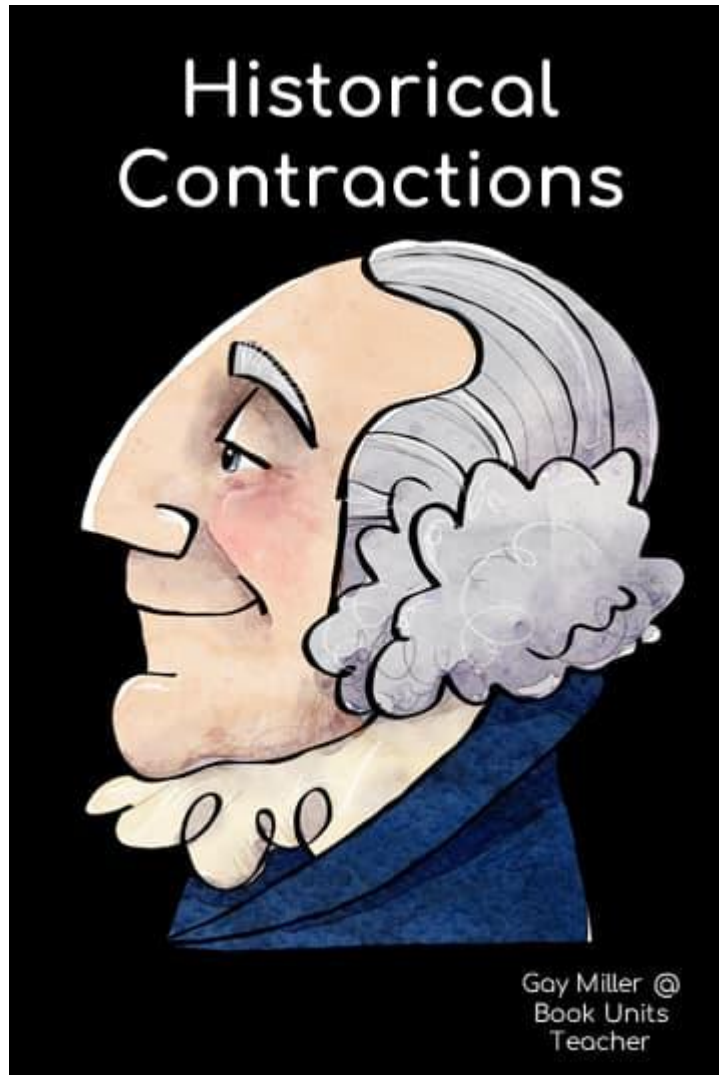
she'd = she had / she would

they'd = they had / they would

we'd = we had / we would

you'd = you had / you would

Teaching Ideas #6 – Using Contractions to Enhance Creative Writing



Using historical contractions in creative writing can add authenticity to a piece. It can also help to establish the character's background, education level, social status, and regional origin.

For example, if a writer were to set a story in the 19th century, using contractions such as "shan't" or "aven't" can indicate a lower social class or a regional dialect. On the other hand, using more formal language without contractions can indicate a higher social class or level of education.

Adding Voice to Characters

Try using contractions to represent a historical time period in your creative writing. By adding some of these contractions in the dialogue of characters from, a sense of time and place are indicated.

Early Modern English (15th-17th century):	Victorian Era (19th century):	World War II Era (mid 20th century):	Contemporary English (present day):	Older contractions (various time periods):
<p>'tis (it is) 'twas (it was) 'twere = it were 'twill (it will) 'thwart (across, against)</p>	<p>shan't (shall not) don'tcha (don't you) 'aven't (haven't) 'adn't (hadn't)</p>	<p>gonna (going to) gotta (have got to) wanna (want to) ain't (am not, is not, are not, has not, have not)</p>	<p>gonna (going to) wanna (want to) gotta (have got to) ain't (am not, is not, are not, has not, have not) should've (should have) could've (could have) would've (would have)</p>	<p>e'er = ever ne'er = never o'er = over 'gainst = against 'fore = before 'midst = amidst 'til = until whene'er = whenever where'er = wherever howe'er = however 'spite = despite 'nough = enough tho' = though an't = am not / are not / is not e'en = even 'mongst = amongst 'cause = because</p>



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