## Contractions

By definition, a contraction is a shortened form of a group of words. Contractions are used in both written and oral communication. When a contraction is written in English, the omitted letters are replaced by an apostrophe.

Here are some common contractions and the groups of words that they represent.
aren't $\rightarrow$ are not
can't $\rightarrow$ cannot
couldn't $\rightarrow$ could not
didn't $\rightarrow$ did not
doesn't $\rightarrow$ does not
don't $\rightarrow$ do not
hadn't $\rightarrow$ had not
hasn't $\rightarrow$ has not
haven't $\rightarrow$ have not
he'd $\rightarrow$ he had; he would
he'Il $\rightarrow$ he will; he shall
he's $\rightarrow$ he is; he has
I'd $\rightarrow$ I had; I would
I'll $\rightarrow$ I will; I shall
I'm $\rightarrow$ I am
I've $\rightarrow$ I have
isn't $\rightarrow$ is not
let's $\rightarrow$ let us
mightn't might not
mustn't $\rightarrow$ must not
shan't $\rightarrow$ shall not
she'd $\rightarrow$ she had; she would
she'll $\rightarrow$ she will; she shall
she's $\rightarrow$ she is; she has
shouldn't $\rightarrow$ should not
that's $\rightarrow$ that is; that has

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\begin{aligned}
& \text { there's } \rightarrow \text { there is; there has } \\
& \text { they'd } \rightarrow \text { they had; they would } \\
& \text { they'll } \rightarrow \text { they will; they shall } \\
& \text { they're } \rightarrow \text { they are } \\
& \text { they've } \rightarrow \text { they have } \\
& \text { we'd } \rightarrow \text { we had; we would } \\
& \text { we're } \rightarrow \text { we are } \\
& \text { we've } \rightarrow \text { we have } \\
& \text { weren't } \rightarrow \text { were not } \\
& \text { what'll } \rightarrow \text { what will; what shall } \\
& \text { what're } \rightarrow \text { what are } \\
& \text { what's } \rightarrow \text { what is; what has } \\
& \text { what've } \rightarrow \text { what have } \\
& \text { where's } \rightarrow \text { where is; where has } \\
& \text { who's } \rightarrow \text { who had; who would } \\
& \text { who'll } \rightarrow \text { who will; who shall } \\
& \text { who're } \rightarrow \text { who are } \\
& \text { who's } \rightarrow \text { who is; who has } \\
& \text { who've } \rightarrow \text { who have } \\
& \text { won't } \rightarrow \text { will not } \\
& \text { wouldn't } \rightarrow \text { would not } \\
& \text { you'd } \rightarrow \text { you had; you would } \\
& \text { you'll } \rightarrow \text { you will; you shall } \\
& \text { you're } \rightarrow \text { you are } \\
& \text { you've } \rightarrow \text { you have }
\end{aligned}
$$

One contraction that is not on the above list is "it's." It is useful to note that "it's," a contraction, is often confused with "its," a possessive pronoun. Remember,

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\text { it's } \rightarrow \text { it is } \quad \text { and } \quad \text { its } \rightarrow \text { possessive pronoun }
$$

Here they are used in sentences.
It's really nice outside today. $\rightarrow$ It is really nice outside today.
The dog ate its food. (The food belongs to the dog.)
The list of contractions in this handout was adapted from http://grammar.about.com/od/words/a/EnglishContractions.htm

You probably use contractions when you speak to your friends and family members every day; however, it is important to note that contractions are often considered inappropriate in formal writing. Professors, employers, and other professionals like to see that you have taken your time on a document, and using contractions is sometimes seen as a shortcut. To be safe, never use contractions when writing for a class or when writing a professional document, such as a personal statement or cover letter.

## Exercises

## Part 1:

Each of the following sentences can be rewritten to contain one or more contraction(s). Using the provided list as a reference, re-write the following sentences.

1. I have been studying for hours, but I still do not feel ready for the exam.
2. You were not at the coffee shop yesterday.
3. The paint she picked out was a lovely color, but it did not match the trim.
4. We would go to the beach with you; however, we have got too many chores to do.
5. You should not use contractions in formal writing.

## Part 2:

Each of the following sentences contains one or more contraction. Re-write each sentence, replacing any contractions with the groups of words they represent.

1. I can't go with you because I'm busy that day.
2. It's clear that the dog is frightened because it keeps placing its tail between its legs.
3. They've been trimming the trees at the park since this morning; I haven't been able to sleep since they started.
4. You mustn't pester your grandmother like that.
5. She'll bring Jonathan with her if he's willing to chip in for gas.

ANSWERS:
Part 1:
1.) I've, don't 2.) weren't 3.) didn't 4.) We'd, we've 5.) shouldn't

Part 2:
1.) cannot, I am 2.) It is 3.) They have, have not 4.) must not 5.) She will, he is

