

English Grammar – Contractions

Native English speakers, given the option, generally prefer to use contractions in **spoken English**. However, contractions are not considered to be “good English” and should be avoided in formal writing. Here are some examples:

<p>The verb “to be”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• I’m, I’m not• he’s, he’s not, he isn’t• she’s, she’s not, she isn’t• it’s, ‘tis, it’s not, ‘tis not, it isn’t, ‘t isn’t• you’re, you’re not, you aren’t• we’re, we’re not, we aren’t• they’re, they’re not, they aren’t• he wasn’t, we weren’t• there’s (= there is)• there’re (= there are)• who’s, where’s, when’s, what’s, etc.• somebody’s, something’s, somewhere’s• anybody’s, anything’s, anywhere’s• everybody’s, everything’s, everywhere’s• nobody’s, nothing’s, nowhere’s <p>Future Simple</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• won’t• I’ll, he’ll, she’ll, it’ll, you’ll, we’ll, they’ll• this’ll, that’ll• there’ll be• what’ll, who’ll, when’ll, which’ll, etc.• me’ll (see image below)	<p>Modal verbs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• can’t• couldn’t• shouldn’t• oughtn’t• mustn’t• mightn’t• shan’t• needn’t <p>Would</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• I’d, I wouldn’t, I’d not• he’d, he’d not, he wouldn’t• she’d, she’d not, she wouldn’t• it’d, it’d not, it wouldn’t• you’d, you’d not, you wouldn’t• we’d, we’d not, we wouldn’t• they’d, they’d not, they wouldn’t• this’d, that’d• there’d be <p>Modal verbs in the past</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• could’ve, couldn’t have• should’ve, shouldn’t have• must’ve, mustn’t have• might’ve, mightn’t have• needn’t have
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<p>Present Perfect</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• I’ve, I’ve not, I haven’t• he’s, he’s not, he hasn’t• she’s, she’s not, she hasn’t• it’s, it’s not, it hasn’t• you’ve, you’ve not, you haven’t• we’ve, we’ve not, we haven’t• they’ve, they’ve not, they haven’t <p>Past Perfect</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• I’d, I’d not, I hadn’t• he’d, he’d not, he hadn’t• she’d, she’d not, she hadn’t• it’d, it’d not, it hadn’t• you’d, you’d not, you hadn’t• we’d, we’d not, we hadn’t• they’d, they’d not, they hadn’t	<p>Auxiliary verbs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• don’t• doesn’t• didn’t• what’d (= what did)• where’d (= where did)• when’d (= when did)• who’d (= who did) <p>Numbers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ‘50s (=1950s)• ‘60s• ‘70s• ‘80s• ‘90s
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People like you and me'll never understand what he went through.

Other examples

- I've got, he's got, she's got, it's got, you've got, we've got, they've got
- ain't, ain't got
- somebody's, something's, somewhere's (is/has)
- anybody's, anything's, anywhere's (is/has)
- everybody's, everything's, everywhere's (is/has)
- nobody's, nothing's, nowhere's (is/has)
- what'd, where'd, how'd, etc. (would)
- how's (= how is)
- let's (= let us)
- o'clock (= of the clock)
- that's (= that is/has)

Contractions are not used in short positive responses:

- Are you OK? Yes, I am. (~~Yes, I'm.~~)
- Am I OK? Yes, you are. (~~Yes, you're.~~)
- Is he OK? Yes, he is. (~~Yes, he's.~~)
- Is she OK? Yes, she is. (~~Yes, she's.~~)
- Is it OK? Yes, it is. (~~Yes, it's.~~)
- Are we OK? Yes, we are. (~~Yes, we're.~~)
- Are they OK? Yes, they are. (~~Yes, they're.~~)
- Have you finished? Yes, I have. (~~Yes, I've.~~)
- Have I finished? Yes, you have. (~~Yes, you've.~~)
- Has he finished? Yes, he has. (~~Yes, he's.~~)
- Has she finished? Yes, she has. (~~Yes, she's.~~)
- Has it finished? Yes, it has. (~~Yes, it's.~~)
- Have we finished? Yes, we have. (~~Yes, we've.~~)
- Have they finished? Yes, they have. (~~Yes, they've.~~)

Contractions are common in tag questions:

- You are French, aren't you?
- Peter went to Paris, didn't he?
- Your parents live in Miami, don't they?

Nouns with contractions

The verbs "is", "has", "would" and "will" are often contracted after a noun. For example:

- Peter's not sick. = Peter **is** not sick.
- My dad's got six dogs. = My dad **has** got six dogs.
- My boss'd know. = My **boss** would know.
- The bride'll arrive late. = The bride **will** arrive late.
- New York's cold in January. = New York **is** cold in January.
- Curitiba's got many parks. = Curitiba **has** got many parks.
- The school'd be closed now. = The school **would** be closed now.
- The cake'll be ready at 5pm. = The cake **will** be ready at 5pm.

Double contractions

In spoken English, it's possible to use two contractions together, forming a "double contraction". Most examples use modal verbs in the past. It is not recommended to use double contractions in written English, since it is not "good English"! Here are some examples:

- I'd've done it. = I **would have** done it.
- He shouldn't've gone. = He **should not have** gone.
- We couldn't've known. = We **could not have** known.
- You needn't've paid so much. = You **need not have** paid so much.

Suggested videos: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ZHIFxCO3BI> (23 mins)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zmeNGtRegvM> (12 mins)