

Contraction Surgery: The Art of Word Stitching

Lesson Overview

In this lesson, Keatyn will become a "Word Surgeon." We will explore how two words can be operated on to create a single, shorter word called a **contraction**. By the end of this session, Keatyn will understand that an apostrophe isn't just a floating comma—it's the "scar" left behind when letters are removed to make language faster and easier to speak.

Learning Objectives

- **Identify:** Recognize common contractions in reading and speech.
- **Analyze:** Determine which two words make up a specific contraction and identify which letters the apostrophe is replacing.
- **Apply:** Correctly use contractions in original sentences and creative writing.

Materials Needed

- Index cards or slips of paper
- Scissors
- Clear tape or Band-Aids (for "surgery")
- Markers (two different colors)
- A small "Medical Kit" (a box or envelope to hold the materials)
- Printed or handwritten list of common word pairs (do not, is not, I am, we will, etc.)

1. Introduction: The Case of the Missing Letters (The Hook)

Time: 5 Minutes

The Scenario: "Keatyn, today you have been recruited as a Chief Word Surgeon. We have a problem: people are in such a hurry to talk that their words are crashing into each other! When words crash, some letters get squished and disappear. We need you to perform surgery to stitch these words back together safely using a special medical tool: the **Apostrophe**."

Discussion: Ask Keatyn, "Have you ever said 'don't' instead of 'do not'? Why do you think we do that?" (Lead them to the idea that it's faster and sounds more natural in conversation.)

2. Instruction: How Surgery Works (I Do)

Time: 10 Minutes

Explain the "Surgery Rules" using a whiteboard or a large piece of paper:

- **Step 1: The Patients.** Take two words that work well together (e.g., *DO* and *NOT*).
- **Step 2: The Incision.** Identify the letters that are being removed to make the word shorter. In

"not," the "o" is usually the one that goes.

- **Step 3: The Stitching.** Push the remaining letters together and place an **apostrophe (')** exactly where the missing letters used to live.

Demonstration: Show "I AM." Remove the "A," slide the "I" and "M" closer, and put the apostrophe in the gap to make "I'm." Point out that the apostrophe is like a placeholder—it tells us, "A letter used to be here!"

3. Guided Practice: Contraction Surgery (We Do)

Time: 15 Minutes

Now, work together to perform "surgery" on several index cards.

1. Write "HE IS" on an index card with a gap between the words.
2. Have Keatyn identify the letter that needs to be removed (the "i").
3. **The Surgery:** Have Keatyn physically **cut out** the letter "i" with scissors.
4. **The Healing:** Use a piece of tape or a Band-Aid to join the "HE" and the "S" back together.
5. **The Scar:** Draw a bold apostrophe on top of the tape/Band-Aid where the "i" used to be.
6. Repeat this with 3-5 more examples (e.g., *WE ARE, CAN NOT, THEY WILL*).

Check for Understanding: Ask, "If we are making 'wasn't,' where does the apostrophe go? What letter is it replacing?"

4. Independent Application: The Script Doctor (You Do)

Time: 15 Minutes

Give Keatyn a short, "formal" paragraph that sounds very stiff because it has no contractions.

Sample Text: "I do not want to go to the park because it is not sunny. I am sure that we will have fun inside. She is coming over later and we are going to play games."

Task: Keatyn must act as the "Script Doctor" and rewrite the paragraph to make it sound like a normal 9-year-old talking by replacing the underlined words with contractions.

Bonus Challenge: Try to find the "Tricky Patient"—the word *WON'T*. Explain that "Will not" is a special surgery where the letters change more than usual!

5. Conclusion: Recovery Room Recap

Time: 5 Minutes

- **Summary:** "Today, you learned that contractions are word shortcuts. The apostrophe is the mark we leave behind to show where letters were removed."
- **Recap:** Have Keatyn name three contractions and the two words that live inside them.
- **Real-World Connection:** For the rest of the day, whenever Keatyn hears someone use a contraction in a movie or conversation, they can shout "Contraction!" to show they spotted one in the wild.

Success Criteria

Skill	Success Looks Like...
Recognition	Keatyn can find the apostrophe and identify the word as a contraction.
Deconstruction	Keatyn can correctly name the two original words (e.g., "don't" = "do not").
Placement	The apostrophe is placed in the gap where letters were removed, not at the end of the word.

Differentiation & Adaptability

- **For a Challenge:** Introduce "Double Contractions" used in some dialects or informal speech (e.g., *I'dn't* for "I would not") or focus on the difference between *It's* (It is) and *Its* (possessive).
- **For Extra Support:** Use "Contraction Matching" cards. Put the two words on one card and the contraction on another. Let Keatyn play a game of Memory or Match-up before trying to write them.
- **Digital Option:** If Keatyn prefers typing, have them use a word processor to find and replace formal word pairs with contractions using the "Find and Replace" tool.