

Tips for Teaching Contractions

My students always had a really hard time understanding the use of apostrophes, both in making contractions and in possessive tense. I had to use little drawings and stories to drive the learning home in a way the children would remember.

Some rules of thumb to make the learning more fun:

- utilize a story, rather than teaching a rule
- relate each part of the lesson to known objects or persons
- act it out
- work at being ridiculous

Contraction Story

I earnestly told my children that contractions began in Wordville, a small town in the Himalayan Mountains. In that small town was a cranky woman who wore black and very pointy boots. We are not certain why she was cranky, but we suspect that she was lonely and really didn't understand that being cranky and scary did not make her less lonely.

So what would happen is that she would be lurking around the town square and would see two citizens of Wordville chatting happily in the market. Here they are:



The cranky woman who wore black and really pointy boots just couldn't stand it. She flew into a rage, gave a mighty kick, and this is what happened:



Now, in spite of the fact that Mr. He was a bit nervous at this point, he felt very sorry for Mr. Is who was now only half there, so he called, "Come here and stand by me!"

And so the half of Mr. Is that was left gladly came to stand by Mr. He but the friends never forgot the boot that brought them together!



As for the cranky woman who wore black and super pointy boots? She was still lonely and still kicked her black pointy boots, sometimes so hard that several letters were lost!

And this is precisely how contractions came to be. Really.