STUDY NOTES

CONTRACTIONS IN INFORMAL ENGLISH

It's quite common and natural in everyday English to use such forms as it's /ɪts/. I've /aɪv/. isn't /ɪznt/. there's /ðεəz/ and others. These are contractions and are shortened forms of a word or words. They represent the grammar or spelling of informal writing. and the pronunciation of informal speech. Though found in informal language only, they are, nonetheless, important when writing informal letters, postcards and notes to friends or even informal emails. Of equal importance is not only using but pronouncing contracted forms correctly when speaking English. Contractions help make your speech sound natural.

STUDY TIPS

Communicating effectively and naturally in English means using contractions in everyday conversational speech.

EPISODE 9: WHALE SHARKS

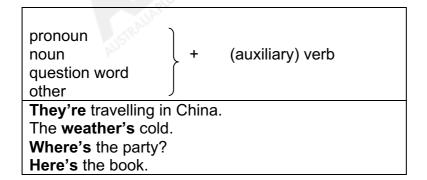
It is also beneficial to put this into practice for the IELTS Speaking test, to capture the rhythm of English in your speech.

Extending the use of contracted forms to informal writing is important because it is common, correct and natural for that style of writing.

Identifying contractions

Contractions are formed with **auxiliary verbs** *be*, *have* and *do*, and **modal auxiliaries**, including *can*, *could*, *might*, *shall*, *should*, *will*, *would*, *ought*, *must* and the semi-modal *need*. They are also formed with **irregular verbs** *be*, *have* and *do* when they're not auxiliary verbs.

There are two kinds of contractions.







(auxiliary) verb	+	not			
She won't be attending the meeting.					
John can't have the car tomorrow.					

Here is a list of contracted forms.

IRREGULAR VERBS

BE /bi/

Forms	Contractions			Negative Contractions
	Pronouns	Nouns	Question Words	20,
present tense - 1st person singular am /æm/ 'm /m/	I'm /aɪm/	Ø	Ø	
3 rd person singular is /iz/ 's /z/ or /s/	he's /hiz/ she's /ʃiz/ it's /ɪts/	friend's /frɛndz/ Jack's /dʒæks/ other words: here's /hɪərz/ there's /ðɛəz/ now's /naʊz/	where's /wɛəz/	isn't /iznt/ she isn't compare: she's not
other are /a/ 're /ə/ or /ər/	you're /jɔ(r)/ we're /wɪə(r)/, /wɜ/ or /wɛə(r)/ they're /ðɛə(r)/ or /ðeɪə(r)/	friends're /frɛndzər/ or /frɛndzə/ sisters're /sɪstəzər/ or /sɪstəzə/ other words: here're /hɪərər/ or /hɪərə/ there're /ðɛərər/ or /ðɛərə/	what're /wɒtə/ or /wɒtər/	aren't /ant/ or /arnt/ they aren't compare: they're not
Forms	Contractio ns	Negative Contraction	Forms	Contractions
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Forms	Contractions			Negative Contractions
	Pronouns	Nouns	Question Words	
Past tense 1 st and 3 rd person singular was /wpz/ or /wəz/	Ø	Ø	Ø	wasn't /wpznt/ I wasn't he wasn't she wasn't it wasn't
other were /w3/ or /wa-/	Ø	Ø	Ø	weren't /w3nt/ or /wernt/ you weren't we weren't they weren't

HAVE /hæv/

Forms	Contractions			Negative Contractions
	Pronouns	Nouns	Question Words	
present tense - 3 rd person singular has /hæz/, /həz/ or /əz/ 's /z/, /s/	he's /hiz/ she's /ʃiz/ it's /ɪts/	friend's /frɛndz/ Jack's /dʒæks/ other words: there's /ðɛəz/	where's /wεəz/	hasn't /hæznt/ he hasn't compare: he's not
other – singular and plural have /hæv/, /həv/ or /əv/ 've /v/ or /əv/	l've /aɪv/ you've /juv/ we've /wiv/ they've /ðeɪv/	tables've /teɪblzəv/ sisters've /sɪstəzəv/	what've /wɒtəv/	haven't /hævnt/ they haven't compare: they've not
Past tense singular and plural had /hæd/, /həd/ or /əd/ 'd /d/ or /əd/	I'd /aɪd/ you'd /jud/ he'd /hid/ she'd /ʃid/ it'd /ɪtəd/ we'd /wid/ they'd /ðeɪd/	friends'd /frɛndzəd/ sister'd /sɪstəd/ other words: there'd /ðɛəd/	who'd /hud/	hadn't /hædnt/ he hadn't compare: he'd not





DO /du/

Forms	Contractions			Negative Contractions
	Pronouns	Nouns	Question Words	
present tense - 3 rd person singular does /dʌz/ or /dəz/	Ø	Ø	Ø	doesn't /dʌznt/ he doesn't compare: he does not
other – singular and plural do /du/ or /dʊ/	Ø	Ø	Ø	don't /dount/ I don't you don't we don't they don't compare: they do not
Past tense singular and plural did /dɪd/	Ø	Ø Streethied opp Stone 1	Ø	didn't /dɪdnt/ I didn't you didn't he didn't she didn't it didn't we didn't they didn't compare: he did not





MODALS

WILL /wil/

Forms	Contractions			Negative Contractions
	Pronouns	Nouns	Question Words	
singular and plural will /wɪl/ or /wəll/ 'II /l/ or /əl/	l'll /aɪl/ you'll /jul/ he'll /hil/, /hɪl/ she'll /ʃil/ it'll /ɪtl/ we'll /wil/, /wɪl/ they'll /ðeɪl/	friend'll /frɛndəl/ Jim'll /dʒɪməl/ other words: there'll /ðɛəl/	who'll /hul/	won't /wount/ he won't compare: he will not

WOULD /wชd/, /wəd/

Forms	Contractions			Negative Contractions
	Pronouns	Nouns	Question Words	
singular and plural would /พชd/ 'd /d/ or /əd/	I'd /aɪd/ you'd /jud/ he'd /hid/ she'd /ʃid/ it'd /ɪtəd/	friends'd /frɛndzəd/ Sally'd /sælid/	where'd /wɛəd/	wouldn't /wodnt/ he wouldn't compare: he would not
	we'd /wid/ they'd /ðeɪd/	other words: there'd /ðɛəd/		





OTHER MODALS

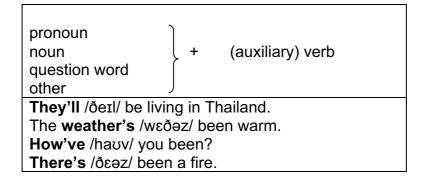
Form stressed and unstressed pronunciation	Negative Contraction	Meaning
can /kæn/, /kən/	can't /kænt/ (Australian English, North American English), /kant/ (Australian English), /kɒnt/ (British English)	cannot
could /kʊd/, /kəd/	couldn't /kʊdnt/	could not
might /maɪt/	mightn't /maɪtnt/	might not
shall /ʃæl/, /ʃəl/	shan't /ʃant/ (British English)	shall not
should /ʃʊd/, /ʃəd/	shouldn't /ʃʊdnt/	should not
ought /ɔt/	oughtn't /otnt/	ought not
must /mʌst/, /məst/	mustn't /mʌsnt/	must not
need /nid/	needn't /nidnt/	need not

Here is a summary of question and other words, which are commonly contracted.

what's	when's	who's	where's	how's
what'll	when'll	who'll	where'll	how'll
		who'd		
here's	there's	that's		
there'll	that'll			

Stress in contractions

In spoken English the following type of contraction is unstressed. These contractions are pronounced shorter and quicker, and, therefore, sometimes difficult to hear. It is an important aspect of casual, conversational English.





When an auxiliary verb is stressed at the end of a sentence or clause, contractions cannot be formed. For example,

Is he upset? Yes, **he is**. Yes, he's.

The other type of contraction can be stressed. These are auxiliary verbs in negative contractions, which can, in distinction, be stressed at the end of sentences or clauses. Negatives are stressed in English, and so a contraction containing a negative is usually stressed.

(auxiliary) verb	+	not	
He won't /woʊnt/	be sittir	g the test.	
You were late toda No, I wasn't /wɒzr	•		

Contractions – confusing forms

Though spelt differently some contractions have the same pronunciation as other grammatical forms. This can cause confusion and misspellings.

Here is a list of such forms.

Word	Pronunciation	Grammar	Example
it's = 'it is' or 'it has'	/rts/	contraction	It's been raining all day.
its	61112	possessive	The tree lost its leaves.
you're = 'you are'	/jo/	contraction	You're driving too fast.
your	P	possessive pronoun	Your driver's licence expires today.
they're = 'there are'	/ðɛə/	contraction	They're sightseeing today.
their		possessive	They've postponed their holiday.
there		adverb	They'll be travelling there tomorrow.
who's = 'who is'	/huz/	contraction	Who's going tonight?
whose		possessive	Whose tickets are these?





Remember that 'is' ('to be') and 'has' ('to have'), as well as 'had' ('to have') and 'would' ('would'), when used as auxiliary verbs contract to the same form 's and 'd, respectively. For example:

It's burnt. \rightarrow It is burnt. I'm sorry, I'll lower the setting on the toaster. It's burnt. \rightarrow It has burnt. I'm sorry, I wasn't watching the time.

They'd travelled to China. \rightarrow They had travelled to China. They'd travel to China. \rightarrow They would travel to China.

If there is any confusion, the context and grammar would make the meaning clear.

