Apostrophe Detectives

Sort the words, then prove two choices.

3.W.8.b "Punctuation – Correctly using apostrophes to form contractions and singular and plural possessives. Using quotation marks to mark direct speech. Using commas in locations and addresses, to mark direct speech..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

CONTRACTION

A contraction joins two words. The apostrophe takes the place of missing letters.

isn't

POSSESSIVE

A possessive shows who owns something. Add 's for one owner or a plural owner that does not end in s. For plural owners that end in s, add an apostrophe after the s.

the fox's den

1 SORT

8 items

For each item, circle JOINED or OWNERSHIP; for Part 2, choose two item numbers and explain how you knew.

1.	they're ready	JOINED OWNERSHIP
2.	the girls' backpacks	JOINED OWNERSHIP
3.	the dog's leash	JOINED OWNERSHIP
4.	can't wait	JOINED OWNERSHIP
5.	we'll play	JOINED OWNERSHIP
6.	the children's toys	JOINED OWNERSHIP
7.	I've finished	JOINED OWNERSHIP
8.	she'll sing	JOINED OWNERSHIP

2 PROVE IT

Explain your thinking

Pick two items from Part 1. For each one, tell how you knew where it belonged.

ITEM # _____ **HOW I KNEW** _____

ITEM # _____ **HOW I KNEW** _____

3 MAKE YOUR OWN

One of each

Write one new contraction and one new phrase that shows ownership. Do not use an example from this page.

JOINED _____

OWNERSHIP _____

CHALLENGE

Write one sentence with a contraction and a plural possessive. Then explain what each apostrophe does.

ANSWER KEY

Apostrophe Detectives

GRADE 3 · 3.W.8.b

PART 1 · SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	they're ready	**JOINED**	They're joins they and are.
2	the girls' backpacks	**OWNERSHIP**	The backpacks belong to more than one girl.
3	the dog's leash	**OWNERSHIP**	The leash belongs to one dog.
4	can't wait	**JOINED**	Can't joins can and not.
5	we'll play	**JOINED**	We'll joins we and will.
6	the children's toys	**OWNERSHIP**	The toys belong to children, an irregular plural that takes 's.
7	I've finished	**JOINED**	I've joins I and have.
8	she'll sing	**JOINED**	She'll joins she and will.

PART 2 · PROVE IT

Accept any explanation that names the deciding feature from the rule box for the chosen item.

PART 3 · MAKE YOUR OWN (SAMPLE ANSWERS)

- **JOINED**: don't
- **OWNERSHIP**: the teachers' lounge

Challenge: The farmers' truck isn't here. The apostrophe in farmers' shows that the truck belongs to more than one farmer, and the apostrophe in isn't replaces the o in is not.

For Part 2, accept explanations that identify missing letters or name who owns something. Item 6 uses 's because children is a plural that does not end in s.