Apostrophe Detective

Sort by what the apostrophe does.

3.5.W.5 "Students will use apostrophes to form complex contractions (e.g., should've, won't, y'all) and to show possession."

NAME _____ DATE _____

CONTRACTION

A contraction is a shorter way to say two words. Its apostrophe helps show where letters were left out.

might've rained

POSSESSION

An apostrophe can show that someone or something has an item.

rabbit's carrot

1 SORT

8 items

Circle JOINED or OWNED for each item, then choose two items and explain how you knew where they belong.

1.	should've waited	JOINED	OWNED
2.	the pirate's map	JOINED	OWNED
3.	the girls' bikes	JOINED	OWNED
4.	won't budge	JOINED	OWNED
5.	y'all are here	JOINED	OWNED
6.	Leo's pencil	JOINED	OWNED
7.	couldn't sleep	JOINED	OWNED
8.	would've called	JOINED	OWNED

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 possession. Do not copy an item above.

JOINED _____

OWNED _____

CHALLENGE

Write one sentence with both kinds of apostrophe words. Underline each word with an apostrophe.

ANSWER KEY

Apostrophe Detective

GRADE 3 · 3.5.W.5

PART 1 · SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	should've waited	**JOINED**	Should've is short for should have.
2	the pirate's map	**OWNED**	The map belongs to the pirate.
3	the girls' bikes	**OWNED**	The bikes belong to the girls.
4	won't budge	**JOINED**	Won't is short for will not.
5	y'all are here	**JOINED**	Y'all is short for you all.
6	Leo's pencil	**OWNED**	The pencil belongs to Leo.
7	couldn't sleep	**JOINED**	Couldn't is short for could not.
8	would've called	**JOINED**	Would've is short for would have.

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**: must've danced
- **OWNED**: bird's nest

Challenge: The fox's den could've flooded.

For Part 2, accept explanations that name the two words joined or identify who has the item. Girls' shows that the bikes belong to more than one girl.