Apostrophe Detectives

Does the apostrophe join words or show ownership?

3.W.8.b.I "Correctly using apostrophes to form contractions and singular and plural possessives."

NAME _____ DATE _____

CONTRACTION

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

I'm sleepy.

POSSESSIVE

A possessive shows ownership. Put the apostrophe before s for one owner, or after s for a plural word that ends in s.

Cats' toys

1 SORT

8 items

Circle JOIN or OWN for each item, then choose one item from each group and explain how its apostrophe helped you sort it.

1.	we're early	JOIN OWN
2.	the dog's bowl	JOIN OWN
3.	the birds' nests	JOIN OWN
4.	can't wait	JOIN OWN
5.	they'll play	JOIN OWN
6.	isn't loud	JOIN OWN
7.	Maya's pencil	JOIN OWN
8.	the boys' bikes	JOIN OWN

2 PROVE IT

Explain your thinking

Choose one item from each group and explain how its apostrophe helped you sort it.

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 with an apostrophe.

JOIN _____

OWN _____

CHALLENGE

Write two phrases about beds: one bed belongs to one puppy, and several beds belong to several puppies.

ANSWER KEY

Apostrophe Detectives

GRADE 3 · 3.W.8.b.I

PART 1 · SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	we're early	**JOIN**	We're joins we and are.
2	the dog's bowl	**OWN**	The bowl belongs to one dog.
3	the birds' nests	**OWN**	The nests belong to more than one bird.
4	can't wait	**JOIN**	Can't joins can and not.
5	they'll play	**JOIN**	They'll joins they and will.
6	isn't loud	**JOIN**	Isn't joins is and not.
7	Maya's pencil	**OWN**	The pencil belongs to Maya.
8	the boys' bikes	**OWN**	The bikes belong to more than one boy.

PART 2 · PROVE IT

Task: Choose one item from each group and explain how its apostrophe helped you sort it.
Accept any explanation that names the deciding feature from the rule box for the chosen item.

PART 3 · MAKE YOUR OWN (SAMPLE ANSWERS)

- **JOIN**: She's hungry.
- **OWN**: The girl's hat

Challenge: a puppy's bed; the puppies' beds

For Part 2, accept explanations that identify missing letters in a JOIN item and an owner in an OWN item. In the challenge, puppy's shows one owner, while puppies' shows more than one.