Apostrophe Detectives

Sort apostrophes by the job they do.

4.W.7.b.I "Correctly using apostrophes to form possessives and contractions."

NAME _____ DATE _____

SHOWS BELONGING

A possessive shows who owns something. Put the apostrophe before s for one owner, or after s when a plural owner's name ends in s.

puppy's leash

SHORTENS WORDS

A contraction makes words shorter. Its apostrophe takes the place of missing letters.

we'll visit soon

1 SORT

8 items

Circle the category for each item, then choose two items, one from each category, and explain how you knew.

1.	Maya's sketchbook	BELONGS	SHORTENS
2.	fox's den	BELONGS	SHORTENS
3.	they're ready	BELONGS	SHORTENS
4.	students' posters	BELONGS	SHORTENS
5.	can't wait	BELONGS	SHORTENS
6.	I've finished	BELONGS	SHORTENS
7.	chef's apron	BELONGS	SHORTENS
8.	birds' nests	BELONGS	SHORTENS

2 PROVE IT

Explain your thinking

Choose two items, one from each category, and explain how you knew.

ITEM # _____ **HOW I KNEW** _____

ITEM # _____ **HOW I KNEW** _____

3 MAKE YOUR OWN

One of each

Write one new example for each category, and label each example.

BELONGS _____

SHORTENS _____

CHALLENGE

Write one sentence that uses both a possessive and a contraction.

ANSWER KEY # Apostrophe Detectives

GRADE 4 · 4.W.7.b.I

PART 1 · SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	Maya's sketchbook	**BELONGS**	The sketchbook belongs to Maya.
2	fox's den	**BELONGS**	The den belongs to the fox.
3	they're ready	**SHORTENS**	They're shortens they are.
4	students' posters	**BELONGS**	The posters belong to the students.
5	can't wait	**SHORTENS**	Can't shortens cannot.
6	I've finished	**SHORTENS**	I've shortens I have.
7	chef's apron	**BELONGS**	The apron belongs to the chef.
8	birds' nests	**BELONGS**	The nests belong to the birds.

PART 2 · PROVE IT

Task: Choose two items, one from each category, and explain how you knew.
Accept any explanation that names the deciding feature from the rule box for the chosen item.

PART 3 · MAKE YOUR OWN (SAMPLE ANSWERS)

- **BELONGS**: Grandpa's toolbox
- **SHORTENS**: didn't

Challenge: Nora's kitten won't sleep.

For Part 2, accept explanations that identify an owner or give the longer form of a contraction. For example, students' shows that the posters belong to the students, and can't means cannot.