

SORTS 43-44

High-Frequency Words and Contractions

NOTES FOR THE TEACHER

Sorts 43 and 44 take us on a detour into the world of high-frequency words and contractions. Up to this point we have included phonetically irregular high-frequency words in word sorts as oddballs. For example, the word *said* was examined along with other long *-a* words that have the *ai* pattern such as *paid* and *wait*. A word like *said* becomes memorable in word sorts because it stands alone in contrast to the many words that work as the pattern would suggest. It is also memorable because students have seen it so often when they read. But there are also some words that students need to write frequently that have not been heretofore included in these weekly lessons. An example of this is the word *because*, which students often spell in their own inventions as BECUZ, BECALZ, or BECAWS. Sort 43 targets many of the high-frequency words that start with the unaccented syllable *be-* (*because*, *believe*, *behind*). These words are contrasted with another group of high-frequency words that start with the unaccented syllable *a-* (*again*, *about*, *across*).

Sort 44 focuses on some high-frequency contractions, words that collapse two or more words by removing some letters and replacing them with an apostrophe. Students need to understand how contractions work so they know where to put the apostrophe when they write, and so they can understand the meaning of contractions when they read. Easier contractions were examined in the letter name-alphabetic supplement (*I'm*, *he's*, *she'll*). In sort 44 we examine more advanced contractions distilled from the combination of adverbs (*where*, *there*, *here*), relative pronouns (*this*, *that*, *who*, *what*), and the like, with helping verbs (*is*, *have*, *will*). Sort 44 presents contractions in groups: the *not* group, the *is* group, the *have* group, and the *will* group. The objective is for students to learn that the apostrophe marks the spot where the letters were removed.

In addition to the sorting activities recommended throughout this supplement, we suggest that you follow our guidelines for the study of high-frequency words as outlined at the end of Chapter 6 in *WTW*. To summarize, the routine we suggest there includes: (1) discussing each word to identify trouble spots as well as familiar chunks, (2) using a self-corrected pretest, followed by (3) the self-study method (look, say, write, and check), and (4) spell checks.

Follow the Standard Weekly Routines for word sorts as described in all previous sorts:

- Demonstrate, Sort, Check, Reflect, and Extend
- Repeated Work with Word Sorts

- Writing Sorts and Word Study Notebooks
- Change-O
- Word-O
- Speed Sorts
- Word Hunts
- Dictated Sentences
- Blind or No-Peeking Sorts
- Games and Other Activities

Assessment

To assess students' mastery of these high-frequency words and contractions, ask them to spell, read, and write the words. Spell Check 9 assesses students' knowledge of high-frequency words in a cloze format using antonyms and synonyms. Spell Check 10 assesses student mastery of more advanced contractions with another cloze procedure in which students write the contraction in the blank provided.

SORT 43 HIGH-FREQUENCY WORDS STARTING WITH A- AND BE-

Sort 43 targets high-frequency words that start with an unaccented syllable. Because the first syllable is unaccented or unstressed, the vowel is reduced to an /uh/ sound as in "uh-bove" for *above*, and "buh-cause" for *because*. Fortunately the vowels in the accented or stressed syllable sound and look more familiar—the *way* of *away* and the *frai*d of *afraid* are spelled with the familiar CVV and CVVC long-vowel patterns studied earlier. The same phenomena exists in the "buh" group and the second syllable is sometimes a complete word: the *side* in *beside*, or the *long* in *belong*, for example. It is important to guide your students to recognize what they already know in these high-frequency two-syllable words to move them into the next level of word study where they will examine syllables and affixes in detail.

Demonstrate, Sort, Check, and Reflect

Prepare a set of words to use for teacher-directed modeling. You might make a transparency to cut apart and model sorting on the overhead projector. Display the words and begin by asking the students to read over them to see if there are any they do not know or understand. Since most of these words are adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, or abstract verbs, these words are hard to discuss. Their meaning is not concrete. To get the conversation going you might find all the words having to do with "location" such as *above*, *below*, *ahead*, and *behind*. Or, ask students to find some words that could describe a person (*afraid*, *alive*, *asleep*). After discussing the words, go ahead and display the headers *a-* and *be-*, then model sorting the words by their beginnings. After sorting all the *a-* words together and all the *be-* words together, read through all the words in a single column. You might want to clap to the rhythm of syllable stress and talk about how the second syllable is accented. See if anyone can find a long vowel in any of the stressed syllables and identify the pattern. Here is the sort:

<i>a-</i>	<i>be-</i>
ago	begin
away	because
again	before

around	between
about	behind
alive	belong
ahead	become
above	beside
across	believe
afraid	below
asleep	began

Extend

After your students have sorted their own word cards and have recorded them in their word study notebooks, ask your students to underline the second syllable of words that are words by themselves. Here is a list of words that contain words in their second syllable:

ago, away, around, alive, ahead, across, asleep
because, belong, become, beside, below

SPELL CHECK 9

ASSESSMENT FOR HIGH-FREQUENCY WORDS STARTING WITH A- AND BE-

This assessment is presented in a cloze format and students must recall 10 high-frequency words that will complete each sentence and write them correctly in the blanks provided. The first five words are prompted by an antonym (opposite) clue in a cloze sentence format. The second five words are prompted by a synonym or definition in a cloze sentence format. If you are grading this assessment, give one point for the correct word choice and another point for its correct spelling. The sentences, and their answers, are as follows:

Antonym Cloze:

1. The opposite of *above* is (below).
2. The opposite of *before* is (after).
3. The opposite of *asleep* is (awake).
4. The opposite of *ahead* is (behind).
5. The opposite of *dead* is (alive).

Synonym Cloze:

6. Another word for *scared* is (afraid).
7. To do something *one more time* is to do it (again).
8. Another way of saying *to start* is to (begin).
9. To *get from one side of the street to the other*, you must go (across).
10. If I *trust* that you are telling me the truth, I (believe) you.

SORT 44 CONTRACTIONS

Sort 44 presents 23 contractions in groups: the *not* group, the *is* group, the *have* group, and the *will* group. These words are boldfaced to be used as key words or column headers. The objective is for students to learn that the apostrophe marks the spot where the letters were removed.

Demonstrate, Sort, Check, and Reflect

Display the headers *not*, *is*, *have*, and *will*. Tell your students that contractions are like compound words with one or more letters removed. Use your finger to cover the *o* in the word *not* and explain that if you took the *o* out of *not*, you could put an apostrophe there instead to mark the place where you removed the letter. Put the word *couldn't* under the header *not* and ask a student to show you where the *o* was removed. Use the same procedure for *is*. Cover up the *i* and explain how you could take a shortcut in writing by removing the *i* and putting an apostrophe in its place. Put the word *who's* under the header *is* and ask someone to show you where the *i* was removed. The words *have* and *will* are a bit more complicated, because the first two letters are removed instead of just the vowel, but you can use the same procedure.

Not	Is	Have	Will
couldn't	who's	could've	they'll
wouldn't	there's	would've	that'll
aren't	here's	should've	this'll
weren't	where's	might've	who'll
shouldn't	what's		she'll
doesn't			he'll
hasn't			you'll

Extend

See if your students can apply their skill with apostrophes to read dialect dialogue in books like *The Talking Eggs* (by Rober D. San Souci), or *Pink and Say* (by Patricia Polacco). Both of these books make heavy use of apostrophes to represent dialect in the dialogue.

SPELL CHECK 10 ASSESSMENT FOR CONTRACTIONS

In this assessment, students read a sentence that contains two underlined words that could be combined and written as a contraction. Students simply write the contraction in the space provided. If you are grading this assessment, each answer is worth one point. The sentences and answers are as follows:

1. They will come to my house for dinner. (*They'll*)
2. Who is going to the party? (*Who's*)
3. She could have won the prize if she had signed her name. (*could've*)
4. They are not the ones who did it. (*aren't*)
5. Here is the work that you missed. (*Here's*)
6. You should not forget your homework. (*shouldn't*)
7. I might have done it differently if I had thought about it. (*might've*)
8. "Who will help me sow the wheat?" asked the Little Red Hen. (*Who'll*)
9. What is five plus three? (*What's*)
10. He does not have enough money to go to the movies. (*doesn't*)

SORT 43 High-Frequency Words Starting with a- and be-

a-	be-	ago
begin	again	because
away	between	around
before	believe	about
alive	become	belong
ahead	beside	across
below	asleep	afraid
began	behind	above

Spell Check 9 Sort 43 High-Frequency Words Starting with a- and be-

Name _____

Antonym Cloze

1. The opposite of *above* is _____.
2. The opposite of *before* is _____.
3. The opposite of *asleep* is _____.
4. The opposite of *ahead* is _____.
5. The opposite of *dead* is _____.

Synonym Cloze

6. Another word for *scared* is _____.
7. To do something *one more time* is to do it _____.
8. Another way of saying to *start* is to _____.
9. To *get from one side of the street to the other*, you must go _____.
10. If I *trust* that you are telling me the *truth*, I _____ you.

SORT 44 Contractions

Not	Is	Have
Will	couldn't	who's
could've	they'll	wouldn't
there's	would've	that'll
aren't	here's	should've
this'll	weren't	where's
might've	she'll	doesn't
he'll	hasn't	you'll
shouldn't	what's	who'll

Spell Check 10 Contractions Name _____

Write the contraction for the underlined words.

1. They will come to my house for dinner. _____
2. Who is going to the party? _____
3. She could have won the prize if she had signed her name. _____
4. They are not the ones who did it. _____
5. Here is the work that you missed. _____
6. You should not forget your homework. _____
7. I might have done it differently if I had thought about it. _____
8. "Who will help me sow the wheat?" asked the Little Red Hen. _____
9. What is five plus three? _____
10. He does not have enough money to go to the movies. _____