

STUDY ENGLISH

IELTS PREPARATION

TRANSCRIPT

EPISODE 9: WHALE SHARKS

Hello. I'm Margot Politis. Welcome to Study English, IELTS preparation.

Today, we're going to look at the use of *contractions* in spoken English. A *contraction* is like a short form in speech.

I've just used three examples:

'I'm' for 'I am',

'we're' for 'we are',

and 'I've' for 'I have'.



English speakers often use contractions, so mastering them will help your speech improve.

Our story today is about tourists helping scientists study whale sharks off the coast of Western Australia.

Listen to this conversation, and try to identify the contractions.

So what sort of information are you recording in your log?

The latitude and longitude, the depth, the time, the sex and any sort of interaction that the swimmers have with it. The whale sharks don't actually seem to mind the interaction with them and certainly if it wasn't for them being out here we wouldn't have the amount of knowledge we do about them.



The difference is, I suppose, with scientific research, you might have a research team here for a week, two weeks, and then they leave. They might come here once every few years. But when you've got, well, six or seven whale shark boats here, three or four in Coral Bay, running for three or four months then their contribution to research is awesome. They're out here every day.

Did you hear the contractions? The first speaker used three of them.

Simon said: 'don't', 'wasn't' and 'wouldn't'.

Listen again.

The whale sharks **don't** actually seem to mind the interaction with them and certainly if it **wasn't** for them being out here we **wouldn't** have the amount of knowledge we do about them.

STUDY ENGLISH

IELTS PREPARATION

'Don't' is a contraction of 'do not'.

'Wasn't' is a contraction of 'was not'.

'Wouldn't' is a contraction of 'would not'.

These are all examples of a very common style of contraction – a *verb* and the *negative*, 'not'.

Now listen to a tour guide, Steve Gibson, talking about the tourists who help study the whale sharks. He uses another type of contraction. Can you identify it?

The difference is, I suppose, with scientific research, you might have a research team here for a week, two weeks, and then they leave. They might come here once every few years. But when **you've** got, well, six or seven whale shark boats here, three or four in Coral Bay, running for three or four months then their contribution to research is awesome. **They're** out here every day.



Steve says: 'you've got' and 'they're out'.

These are contractions of *pronouns* with the *verbs* 'to have' and 'to be'.

'You've' is a contraction of 'you have'.

'They're' is a contraction of 'they are'.

We can also make contractions with *nouns* and other words. Let's look at a few.

"My brother's studying."

'Brother's' is a contraction of 'brother is'.

"Who's going out tonight?"

'Who's' is a contraction of 'who is'.

"There's our bus."

'There's' is a contraction of 'there is'.

When writing informally, for example in notes or postcards, it's fine to use contractions, because they represent spoken language. However, if you are writing formally, 'do not' use contractions. Remember that in formal writing, words that are not in the dictionary should not be used.

STUDY ENGLISH

IELTS PREPARATION

Finally, let's consider the *pronunciation* of contractions. Some are stressed, and others are not.

But just remember, the rules for stressing words can change according to context.

Here's a guide.

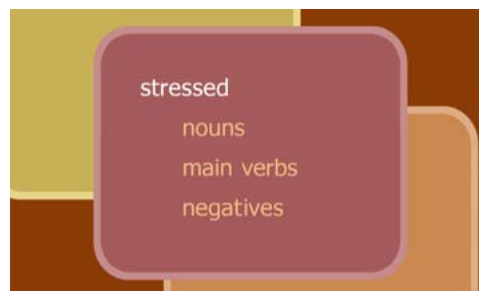
Contractions are 'stressed' when they're formed from *nouns*, *main verbs* and *negatives*.

For example:

"my 'brother's' studying",

"if it 'wasn't' for them",

"we wouldn't have".

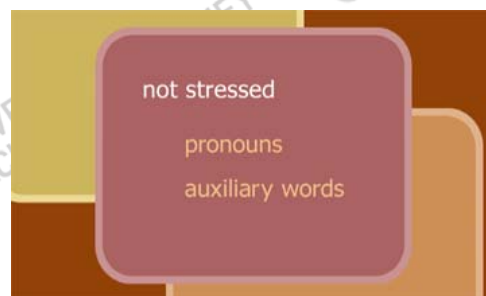


Contractions are 'not' stressed when they're formed from *pronouns* and *auxiliary words*.

For example, Steve says:

"when you've got boats here",

"they're out here every day".



Notice that contractions cannot occur at the end of a sentence, except for the contraction of a *verb* and 'not'.

For example,

"He's sick."

"Yes, I know he is." We cannot say "Yes I know he's."

But we can say:

"I'm hurt."

"No, you aren't."

OK. Now we're going to watch the story again. This time, listen for the use of *nouns*.

So what sort of information are you recording in your log?

The latitude and longitude, the depth, the time, the sex and any sort of interaction that the swimmers have with it. The whale sharks don't actually seem to mind the interaction with them and certainly if it wasn't for them being out here we wouldn't have the amount of knowledge we do about them.

The difference is, I suppose, with scientific research, you might have a research team here for a week, two weeks, and then they leave. They might come here once every few years. But when you've got, well, six or seven whale shark boats here, three or four in Coral Bay, running for three or four months then their contribution to research is awesome. They're out here every day.



All the speakers use a number of *nouns*.

In English nouns are either *countable* or *uncountable* - that is, we can either count them or we can't.

Let's look at *countable nouns*.

Countable nouns are generally things like:

'people' – a teacher, a cook, a swimmer;

'animals' – a dog, a cat, a whale shark;

'plants' – a lily, a bush, a tree;

'objects' – a chair, a table, a boat;

'units of measurement' – a litre, a dollar, a cup.

Uncountable nouns are generally more abstract, and include things such as:

'languages' – Chinese, Japanese, German;

'emotions' – happiness, sadness, anger;

'ideas' – intelligence, luck, knowledge;

'substances or materials' – like air, oil or rice.

Countable nouns have two forms. They can be 'singular' or 'plural'.

But *uncountable nouns* have only one form, and cannot form a plural.

STUDY ENGLISH

IELTS PREPARATION

Let's have a look at that.

'Chair' can be singular or plural, 'chairs'. It is a specific, concrete thing, so it is a *countable noun*.

We can say:

"I would like to buy three chairs."

However, 'furniture' is an abstract noun. It has only one form, and cannot be made into a plural.

It is an *uncountable noun*.

We can say:

"I would like to buy all that furniture."

Using a word like 'all' indicates quantity or amount.

Listen to how Simon Stevens measures knowledge in this clip.

The whale sharks don't actually seem to mind the interaction with them and certainly if it wasn't for them being out here we wouldn't have the amount of knowledge we do about them.

He says 'an amount of knowledge'.

'Knowledge' is an *uncountable noun*. It can't be counted. We haven't got a specific number we can apply to define a 'quantity of knowledge'.

We use 'quantity words' or 'measure words' with *uncountable nouns*, instead of numbers.

We say:

'an amount of knowledge',

'a cup of tea',

'a loaf of bread',

'a degree of happiness',

'a measure of luck', or

'a gust of wind'.

OK, so today we've looked at different types of *contractions* and how they are *stressed* in phrases, and we looked at *countable and uncountable nouns*.

STUDY ENGLISH

IELTS PREPARATION

If you would like to watch today's story again, look at some study notes or do some exercises, you can go to our website anytime. It's at abcasiapacific.com/studyenglish.

That's all for today. I'll see you next time on Study English. Bye bye.

