

# When to Shorten Words with 've

A common mistake in contractions is to write **of** when we mean **have**.

For example:

I could **of** danced all night.  
*instead of*  
I could'**ve** danced all night.

In speech the two sentences sound the same but we need to write them correctly.

I could'**ve** cried.  
*is short for*  
I could **have** cried.

I should'**ve** gone home.  
*is short for*  
I should **have** gone home.

He would'**ve** told me.  
*is short for*  
He would **have** told me.

They are 'contracted' by squeezing out the **ha** of **have** and putting an apostrophe in instead.

I may **have** missed the train.  
*becomes*  
I may'**ve** missed the train.

I must **have** done a great job.  
*becomes*  
I must'**ve** done a great job.

I might **have** made it.  
*becomes*  
I might'**ve** made it.

Once you have it clear in your mind it's easy to write it correctly.