BARBARA: Morning, Shannon.

SHANNON: Good morning, Barbara.

BARBARA: How are you doing?

SHANNON: I am well. Thank you, Barbara. How are you?

BARBARA: I'm OK.

SHANNON: I am glad to hear it.

BARBARA: Why so formal today, Shannon?

SHANNON: I am glad you asked. One of my professors told me that we are not supposed to use contractions in formal writing, so I am practicing avoiding contractions in my speech as well.

BARBARA: I admire your commitment. You should avoid using contractions if your instructor has specifically asked you not to use them in your writing assignments. But you know, that doesn't mean you have to avoid them all the time.

SHANNON: It does not?

BARBARA: Nope, contractions are a normal part of everyday communication. So it's only natural to use them when you start putting words down on paper. However, even when you're doing the type of writing where contractions are appropriate, there are still some things to avoid.

BARBARA: Like what?

SHANNON: You generally shouldn't use complex contractions like she'd have or she wouldn'tve. They're rather long and unwieldy. It's also important to keep in mind that apostrophe D can be a contraction for either had or would, and an apostrophe S can mean either is or has.

When a writer uses she'd, it's hard to tell if the intent is she had or she would. This can lead to some ambiguous or awkward phrases such as "He's no money." The writer must be he has no money, but the contraction makes it sound like he is no money. In these cases, it's better to use the complete words instead of contractions in order to be as clear as possible to the reader.

Other than that, if it's not a formal paper, it's probably fine to use a contraction if that's the natural way you'd say it. Contract away.

SHANNON: I'm glad to hear it. Thanks, Barbara.

BARBARA: No, problem, Shannon. Glad to have that apostrophe back.