

HYPHENS

The *hyphen* is used to link the parts of some compound words. It also links the parts of a word begun on one line and finished on the next. Consult a dictionary if you are unsure about how to hyphenate any given word.

1. Use a hyphen to link the parts of compound nouns that begin with the prefixes “ex-,” “self-,” “great-” or that end with the suffix “-elect.”

ex-partner self-esteem president-elect

2. Use a hyphen to link the parts of compound nouns that include a prepositional phrase.

son-in-law man-of-war jack-in-the-box

3. Use a hyphen to link prefixes with proper nouns or adjectives.

pro-American post-impressionist

NOTE: Many compound words are not hyphenated. Some are two separate words (tennis court), but some are written as a single word (basketball).

4. Use a hyphen to link the parts of a compound adjective when it precedes the noun.

coal-mining equipment grease-stained jeans

NOTE: Do not use a hyphen if the adjective follows the noun or if the first modifier is an adverb ending in *-ly* (quickly heated soup).

5. Use a hyphen to link parts of a fraction used as an adjective.

two-thirds empty one-half finished

NOTE: Omit the hyphen if the fraction is used as a noun.

One half of the bus was empty.

6. Use a hyphen to link the parts of a compound number between twenty-one and ninety-nine.

forty-five seats thirty-four years

7. Use a hyphen when a word is divided at the end of a line. Place a hyphen between syllables only. Do not hyphenate a word if doing so would leave just one letter on either line. If a word already contains a hyphen, divide it only at the hyphen.

Today many people are still interested in the trapper's independent life style.

Everyone seems to be interested in electronic gadgetry and state-of-the-art computers.

8. Use hyphens to distinguish between two words that are spelled similarly and might be confused.

m-e-e-t is not the same as m-e-a-t

9. Use a hyphen to further clarity and readability.

re-cover (as opposed to recover) de-escalate

Exercise: Insert hyphens in the following sentences where they are needed.

EXAMPLE: The team's owner manager was arrested for gambling.
(Insert a hyphen between owner and manager: owner-manager.)

1. There are at least twenty five ways to complete that project.
2. The verb is spelled d e v i s e, the noun, d e v i c e.
3. The team had a pre game meeting in the locker room.
4. The nineteen eighties was a time of political conservatism.
5. Ninety seven people applied for one job opening at the bank.
6. I read pages 491 543 in my history text last night.
7. The man made virus was barely contained.
8. The strong antiinflation measures were largely ineffective.
9. There is much pro Israeli sentiment in the American government.
10. Joel Barlow (1754 1812) is a little known American poet.
11. The day to day figures looked good for the new company.

ANSWERS:

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|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------|
| 1. twenty-five | 6. 491-543 | 11. day-to-day |
| 2. d-e-v-i-s-e, d-e-v-i-c-e | 7. man-made | |
| 3. pre-game | 8. anti-inflation | |
| 4. nineteen-eighties | 9. pro-Israeli | |
| 5. ninety-seven | 10. (1754-1812), little-known | |

