



Hyphens

Hyphens are used to join words or to separate syllables of a word at the end of a sentence.

Hyphens with compound words

1. Compound adjectives. Hyphenate most compound adjectives that modify a single noun and that precede the noun. (Do not use a hyphen if the compound adjective follows the noun or if the word is an -ly adverb or adjective.)
 - The well-known author has connections to the mob.
 - A two-foot snake crossed our path.
2. Compound numbers. Compound numbers are hyphenated.
 - She was fifty-six years old.
 - There are forty-nine books on that very subject.
3. Coined compounds. These are combinations of words that you are using in an unexpected way.
 - There she stood with her I-don't-need-anyone-telling-me attitude.
 - The clerk had the don-t-go-there look, so I kept my mouth shut.
4. Suspended hyphens. You can use a hyphen for words that share the same base word.
 - Each parent asked him- or herself the same question.

Prefixes and suffixes. Most words written with pre- or suffixes are written without hyphens except in the following instances.

1. If the prefix is before a capitalized base word.
 - un-American
 - Pre-Civil War
2. If the prefix accompanies a number.
 - The pre-1970
 - The post-1850
3. Prefixes with ex
 - Ex-wife
 - Ex-husband
4. Prefixes with self or all
 - Self-aware
 - All-state
5. Suffix elect
 - President-elect
 - Governor-elect
6. Prefixes with compound base words
 - Post-high school
 - Pre-elementary school Clarity. Use hyphens if it will clarify.

1. If the word can be misread: re-cover, meaning to cover again versus recover.
2. If the prefix or suffix begins with the same letter that the base word begins or ends with. Antiinflation, troll-like, semi-independent, shell-like.

Divided word at the end of the line. Only break the word between syllables. Di-vide or be-tween.

For already hyphenated words, divide the word at the hyphen. Mass-produced.