

A single dash

What is a dash?

A single dash can be used in a number of ways to link two sentences together.



1. A dash can be used to separate a list from its summary. The summary may come before or after a list.

Examples

There was a pool, a beach and a park - it was the best holiday ever.

It was the best holiday ever - there was a pool, a beach and a park.

My favourite kind of fruit is citrus fruits - oranges, grapefruits, lemons, limes.

Oranges, grapefruits, lemons, limes - my favourite kind of fruit is citrus fruits.

2. The part of the sentence after the dash is often surprising or unexpected. The dash gives you a moment of suspense before the surprise.

Examples

She got home, put the kettle on and sat down - then she remembered.

There was again, that creak on the staircase. Jenna sat bolt upright. Just Marmalade her cat, she thought - or was it?

It was only when I squinted that I could see what lay at the bottom of the steps - bones. Lots of bones.



3. Sometimes you want to emphasise a particular word in a sentence by repeating it. If you do this, use a dash to separate the two identical words.

Examples

The jumper she made was full of mistakes - mistakes which you could see at a glance.

If one word can describe him, it is determination - determination to be the best that he can be.

