

HYPHENS

What are hyphens?

Hyphens are mainly used to join words together. It looks like a dash, but is half the length.

There are a number of uses for a hyphen:

Compound Words

Some compound words require a hyphen.
Compound words are made by joining words together.

Compound Nouns

water-wheel

mix-up

great-aunt

Compound Adjectives

sky-blue

fair-haired

bad-tempered

time-saving

full-length

Avoiding Confusion

Without the hyphen, the meaning of the word can change entirely.

a man eating tiger

a man-eating tiger

Sometimes words can be spelt the same way, but have very different meanings.

These are called homographs.

Re-cover

Recover

Redress

Re-dress

Re-creation

Recreation

Writing numbers

Use a hyphen between the tens and units when writing numbers from twenty-one to ninety-nine.

Sixty-six

Three-quarters

Twenty-five



After a prefix

Pre-school

Ex-army

Multi-storey



If in doubt, use a dictionary!