

## Punctuation: *Hyphens*

**Hyphens** have multiple uses and purposes. They can be used to *divide* the last word on a line, to combine two or more words into *compounds*, and to express numerical values.

### When do I use a hyphen at the end of a line?

If you must divide a word, try your best not to divide the last word on the first line of a document or paper, the last word in a paragraph, or the last word on a full page. The tables below show examples of the proper (and improper) ways to use hyphens at the end of a line.

#### Divide words **ONLY** between syllables

<b>NO!</b>	<i>ent-ertain</i>	<i>proc-ceed</i>
<b>YES!</b>	<i>enter-tain</i>	<i>pro-ceed</i>

**Never divide words that are short, contain only one syllable, or are pronounced as if they contain a single syllable**

<b>NO!</b>	<i>we-alth</i>	<i>en-vy</i>	<i>scream-ed</i>
<b>YES!</b>	<i>wealth</i>	<i>envy</i>	<i>screamed</i>

**Never divide a word if only one or two letters will be carried over to the next line**

<b>NO!</b>	<i>a-live</i>	<i>touch-y</i>	<i>he-licopter</i>
<b>YES!</b>	<i>alive</i>	<i>touchy</i>	<i>helicopter</i>

#### Divide between two consonants in accordance to their punctuation

<b>NO!</b>	<i>ful-ness</i>	<i>omitt-ing</i>	<i>punct-ure</i>
<b>YES!</b>	<i>full-ness</i>	<i>omit-ting</i>	<i>punc-ture</i>

### How do I use a hyphen with PREFIXES and SUFFIXES?

**Prefixes** are syllables that are in front of a **root** (a word's core), which carries the origin or the meaning. Prefixes are used to *modify* meanings.

**Suffixes** also have the power to modify, but they come after the root.

Some prefixes and suffixes are attached to root words with hyphens, but others are not.

**NEVER use a hyphen when *self* is a root word, NOT prefix**

<b>NO!</b>	<i>self-ishness</i>	<i>self-less</i>
<b>YES!</b>	<i>selfishness</i>	<i>selfless</i>

**Use a hyphen to avoid a distracting string of letters:**

<b>NO!</b>	<i>antiintellectual</i>	<i>belllike</i>	<i>prooutsourcing</i>
<b>YES!</b>	<i>anti-intellectual</i>	<i>bell-like</i>	<i>pro-outsourcing</i>

**Use a hyphen to ADD a prefix or suffix to a numeral, or to a proper noun:**

<b>NO!</b>	<i>post1950s</i>	<i>proAmerican</i>	<i>Rembrandtlike</i>
<b>YES!</b>	<i>post-1950s</i>	<i>pro-American</i>	<i>Rembrandt-like</i>

**Use a hyphen to prevent confusion in meaning or pronunciation of a word:**

	<i>re-dress</i> (means to dress again)	<i>redress</i> (means to set right)
	<i>un-ionize</i> (means to remove ions)	<i>unionize</i> (means to form a union)

- Use hyphens *after* the prefixes (*self-reliant; all-inclusive*)
- Use a hyphen before the suffix *-elect* (*president-elect*)
- Use a hyphen when two or more prefixes apply to ONE root word (*pre- and post-Renaissance*)

**How do I use hyphens with compound words?**

A **compound word** puts two or more words together to express a single concept.

Compound words come in **three** forms: an **open-compound** word (*night shift*); **hyphenated compound** (*tractor-trailer*); and **closed-compound** word (*handbook*).

**Divide a compound word already containing a hyphen only AFTER that hyphen.**

**Divide a closed-compound word only between two complete words:**

<b>NO!</b>	<i>self-con-scious</i>	<i>sis-ter-in-law</i>	<i>mas-terpiece</i>
<b>YES!</b>	<i>self-conscious</i>	<i>sister-in-law</i>	<i>master-piece</i>

**Use a hyphen between a PREFIX and an OPEN-COMPOUND word:**

<b>NO!</b>	<i>antigun control</i> ('gun control' is an open compound word)
<b>YES!</b>	<i>anti-gun control</i>

**NEVER use a hyphen with COMPARATIVE (*more, less*) and SUPERLATIVE (*most, least*) compound forms:**

<b>NO!</b>	<i>more-appropriate idea</i>	<i>least-advanced</i>
<b>YES!</b>	<i>more appropriate idea</i>	<i>least advanced</i>

**NEVER use a hyphen when a compound modifier starts with an *-ly*:**

<b>NO!</b>	<i>happily-married couple</i>	<i>loosely-tied package</i>
<b>YES!</b>	<i>happily married couple</i>	<i>loosely tied package</i>

**NEVER use a hyphen with a possessive compound:**

<b>NO!</b>	<i>a full-week's work</i>	<i>eight-hours' pay</i>
<b>YES!</b>	<i>a full week's work</i>	<i>eight hours' pay</i>

**Some things to remember...**

- Use hyphens when a compound modifier includes a series (*two-, three-, or four-year program*)
- NEVER use a hyphen when a compound word is a foreign phrase because we don't know the correct placement of a hyphen in a foreign word (example: *post hoc*)
- ALWAYS look up the word in the dictionary if you are unsure whether it needs a hyphen, is an open-compound, or a closed-compound!