

# 1 Here's the Idea

A **hyphen** (-) connects words, word elements, or the parts of a compound word. A **dash** (—) sets off an abrupt change of thought or an explanation. An **ellipsis** (. . .) shows that a word, phrase, line, or paragraph has been omitted.

## Hyphens

► **Use a hyphen to divide a word at the end of a line.**

In casual speech, confidence artists are often called **scammers** and grifters.

### Rules for Hyphenating at the End of a Line

Hyphenating Rule	Incorrect	Correct
Divide a word only between syllables.	gua- ranteed	guar- anteed
Make sure that at least two letters of the hyphenated word fall on each line.	nondair- y	non- dairy
Divide an already-hyphenated word at the hyphen.	self-satis- fied	self- satisfied
Do not divide a one-syllable word.	kni- ves	knives

► **Use a hyphen in compound numbers from twenty-one to ninety-nine and with fractions.**

**sixty-two** years      **three-fourths** of a cup

► **Use a hyphen in certain compound nouns.**

**self-restraint**   **brother-in-law**   **vice-president**

► **Hyphenate a compound adjective when it comes before the noun it modifies.**

He was a **well-informed** candidate.

In general, do not hyphenate a compound adjective when it follows the noun it modifies.

During the debate, the candidate seemed **well informed**.

- ▶ Use a hyphen with the prefixes *ex-*, *self-*, *quasi-*, and *all-* and with the suffix *-elect*.

ex-officer    self-made    all-around    president-elect

- ▶ Use a hyphen to avoid confusion or to avoid repeating a vowel or consonant. When in doubt, check a dictionary.

recreate (as opposed to *recreate*)    anti-itch    shell-like

#### STUDENT MODEL

A **self-confident** trickster duped the Junior Class. **Mayor-elect** Kim is heading an **all-out** effort to catch the con artist who talked the juniors into an **unsound** investment. With **childlike** gullibility, the class officers handed three thousand dollars to the trickster, who had promised a **tenfold** increase in only two months. Unfortunately, the company that manufactures **anti-intruder** devices never existed.

Hyphen needed to set off prefix or suffix

No hyphen needed

Hyphen needed to avoid repeating a vowel

## Dashes

- ▶ Use a dash to signal an abrupt change or an idea that breaks into the thought of a sentence.

Victims of scams often do not report the crime—  
embarrassment hurts more than financial loss.

- ▶ Use dashes to set off explanatory, supplementary, or parenthetical material in sentences. Note that parentheses and commas may be used for the same purpose.

Certain traits in the victim—**greed, neediness, gullibility**—make the con artist's job easier.

#### PROFESSIONAL MODEL

Since we aren't always at home, the Fourth [Amendment] applies not only to houses but to such places as business offices, cars, hotel rooms, and—**far-fetched though it sounds**—even to telephone booths. . . .

In most cases, the law requires that searches and seizures be made only with a warrant—**a legal document that permits such action**.

—Bernice Kohn, *The Spirit and the Letter*

Some computers or word-processing programs have the dash—also known as the em dash—as a character. If you can't find this character, type two hyphens (--).

**For guidelines on using commas, dashes, and parentheses to set off explanatory material, see p. 263.**

## Ellipses

▶ **Use an ellipsis (also called ellipsis points) to show that one or more words have been omitted within a quoted sentence.**

An ellipsis consists of three periods preceded and followed by spaces (. . . , not ...).

“The judge raised her gavel and . . . demanded order.”

▶ **Use a period and three ellipsis points to show the following types of omissions within quoted material:**

1. omission of the last part of a sentence
2. omission of the first part of the following sentence
3. omission of an entire sentence or more
4. omission of an entire paragraph or more

### LITERARY MODEL

When the magician's engagement closed there was but one person   who did not believe in mesmerism and I was the one. All the others were converted but I was to remain an implacable and unpersuadable disbeliever in mesmerism and hypnotism. . . .

—Mark Twain, *The Autobiography of Mark Twain*

**Ellipsis:** words omitted from middle of sentence

**Period and ellipsis:** words omitted from last part of sentence

▶ **In fiction or informal writing, three ellipsis points may also be used to indicate that an idea or a character's voice trails off.**

Notice such a use of ellipsis points in the following cartoon.