



## Using Hyphens

A hyphen is a short line used to connect words.

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Hyphens join words to form compound adjectives, connect numbers/fractions and can help us avoid ambiguity.

*mother-in-law, well-known, two-thirds*

# Hyphenate Compound Adjectives Before Nouns

When a compound adjective comes before a noun, it should be hyphenated to help avoid confusion.

*A well-known actor*

*A time-consuming task*

*A part-time job*

# Hyphenate Compound Adjectives Before Nouns

If the compound adjective is after the noun, a hyphen isn't needed.

*The actor is well known.*  
*The task is time consuming.*  
*My job is part time.*

# Hyphens Help Avoid Ambiguity

Inserting hyphens can help us clarify meaning.

*Small-business owner (owner of a small business)*  
*Small business owner (a business owner who is  
small in size)*

# Numbers, Fractions and Ages

Hyphens are used with numbers as adjectives, fractions and ages.

*A two-week holiday*

*A ten-foot pole*

*A three-quarters share*

# Fixed expressions/ hyphenated compound words

Hyphenated compound words simply require a hyphen.

*Mother-in-law*

*Editor-in-chief*

*Check-in desk*

# Prefixes

Some prefixes require a hyphen, this may also be to clarify meaning.

*To re-enter*  
*To co-operate*  
*Anti-inflammatory*