

HYPHEN CHART

GrammarCorner.com

What Is a Hyphen?

The hyphen (-) is a short horizontal punctuation mark with one big job: connecting things.

The hyphen works like a link joining the words 'well' and 'known' into one term

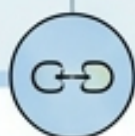


- Joins words into compound terms
- Links numbers and quantities
- Marks word breaks at line ends
- Clarifies up meaning

Think of the hyphen as a small bridge that turns two words into one idea.

You will meet hyphens everywhere — in schoolbooks, news articles, emails, and text messages alike. They appear in both formal and informal writing, which makes the hyphen one of the most aoruent frequently used punctuation marks in English.

What Does a Hyphen Do?



Joins words into compound terms

Two or more words link up to act as a single describing word before a noun.

a well-known author •
a state-of-the-art kitchen



Links numbers and quantities

Hyphens hold number words and measurements together so they read as one unit.

twenty-one students •
a five-kilogram bag



Breaks words across lines

When a word cannot fit at the end of a line, a hyphen splits it neatly between syllables.

read- at the line's end, then
ability on the next line



Clarifies meaning

A tiny dash can stop a phrase from being misread and keep your meaning sharp.

a small-business owner
(owner of a small business)

Try It: Join the Words

She is a well known author.
(two separate words)

Add the hyphen

well - known

She is a well-known author.
(one compound term)

Remove the hyphen

What Does a Hyphen Look Like?

The hyphen is the shortest member of the dash family — a small stroke roughly half the length of an en dash. Compare them side by side:

- (Hyphen) — short and compact; it joins and splits words. (This section's star.)
- (En dash) — about twice as long as a hyphen. Notice the difference in width?

Splitting Words at the End

Hyphens also keep printed text tidy. When a long word will not fit at the end of a line, the hyphen splits it between syllables so the text stays even and easy to read:

Without a hyphen

The new library focuses on readability and comfort for every visitor.

The first line ends early, leaving an uneven gap.

With a hyphen

The new library focuses on read-ability and comfort for every visitor.

The word breaks cleanly between syllables, and the lines stay balanced.

A Little History

The hyphen began life in ancient Greek, where it was used to show that separated syllables belonged together. Centuries later, it is still doing the same job in English — quietly connecting parts so ideas flow without interruption.

GrammarCorner.com

Remember

A hyphen is a connector, not a pause. Whether it is building well-known, holding twenty-one together, or splitting a word at a line break, its job is always the same: keep connected things connected.