

Main Uses of the Hyphen

1. To check if a compound noun is two words, one word, or hyphenated, you must look it up in the dictionary. If you can not find the word in the dictionary, treat the noun as separate words:

Examples: eyewitness, eye shadow, eye-opener

2. Compound verbs are usually hyphenated or appear as one word. If you do not find the verb in the dictionary, hyphenate it.

Examples: To air-condition the house will be costly.

We were notified that management would downsize the company next year.

3. Generally, hyphenate between two or more adjectives (including the first word with a *-ly* ending) when they come before a noun and act as a single idea.

Examples: his easy-going nature, bright young woman, friendly-looking man, friendly little girl

4. When a prefix ends in one vowel and the root word begins with the same vowel, attach them with a hyphen. Without a hyphen, doubled vowels would make the term hard to recognize.

Examples: anti-icing, ultra-ambitious

5. Hyphenate all words beginning with *self* except for *selfish* and *selfless*.

Examples: self-assured, self-respect

6. Use the hyphen with the prefix *-re* only when the *-re* means *again*.

Examples: I have re-covered the sofa twice.

Will she recover from her illness?