



## THE HYPHEN

### Helpful hint

A hyphen is not a dash; a hyphen is one keyboard stroke. A dash equals two hyphens, without spacing before or after. See **Chapter 22** for when to use a dash.

### 21a

#### Join words to make compound adjectives

A hyphen is used to join two adjectives into a compound adjective before a noun. Do not use a hyphen between the two adjectives when they follow a verb and are not in front of a noun to describe it.

- **freeze-dried** coffee, red-light district, well-lighted sign, carry-on luggage
- She can't tolerate coffee that is **freeze dried**.

### 21b

#### Connect prefixes and suffixes to root words

**1. Join certain prefixes (*all-*, *ex-*, *half-*, and *self-*) to a root word**

- all-inclusive, ex-husband, half-back, self-starter

## 2. Link a single letter to a noun or participle

A hyphen can also be used to join single letters to a noun or participle.

→ X-ray, y-axis, U-turn, G-rated

### DID YOU KNOW?

In 2007, the sixth edition of the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* removed the hyphens from over 16,000 words, including *crybaby*, *toolbar*, *ice cream*, and *chickpea*.



## 21c

### Join words to make compound numbers

A hyphen is used to join compound numbers from *twenty-one* to *ninety-nine*.

→ twenty-one, thirty-two, forty-three, forty-four



What's wrong with this sign?

## 21d

## Join numbers

Hyphens are used to join the numerator and denominator in a fraction. They are also used to give a person's life span or a score.

- ➔ one-fourth, two-thirds, four-fifths
- ➔ Edward Minor Gallaudet (1837-1917) was the founder and first president of a university for the deaf.
- ➔ In last night's bowling championship, Smith beat Jones 222-219.

## 21e

## Prevent confusion

A hyphen should be used to avoid awkward spelling or confusion when using a prefix or suffix.

- ➔ pre-eminent, re-educate, anti-infective
- ➔ The football player will re-sign. vs. The football player will resign.

## EXERCISE 1

*Directions: Add a hyphen where necessary.*

1. My mother-in-law's X-ray was the first sign of her health crisis.
2. The recreation or remodeling of a piece of art can cause controversy.
3. *Signs* is a hair-raising film from beginning to end, even though the audience does not know what is truly happening until halfway through.
4. Although M. Night Shyamalan is best known for *The Sixth Sense*, *Signs* is also a well-known film.
5. Both *The Sixth Sense* and *Signs* are truly all-American films.

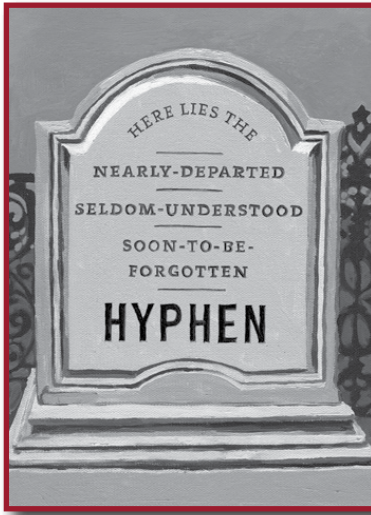


Photo from: [crackdmuskegonnewz.blogspot.com](http://crackdmuskegonnewz.blogspot.com): "Hyphen-Nation."

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