HYPHENS

The hyphen is used to link the parts of some compound words. It also links the parts of a word begun on one line and finished on the next. Consult a dictionary if you are unsure about how to hyphenate any given word.

1. Use a hyphen to link the parts of compound nouns that begin with the prefixes “ex-,” “self-,” “great-” or that end with the suffix “-elect.”
   
   ex-partner  self-esteem  president-elect

2. Use a hyphen to link the parts of compound nouns that include a prepositional phrase.
   
   son-in-law  man-of-war  jack-in-the-box

3. Use a hyphen to link prefixes with proper nouns or adjectives.
   
   pro-American  post-impressionist

   NOTE: Many compound words are not hyphenated. Some are two separate words (tennis court), but some are written as a single word (basketball).

4. Use a hyphen to link the parts of a compound adjective when it precedes the noun.
   
   coal-mining equipment  grease-stained jeans

   NOTE: Do not use a hyphen if the adjective follows the noun or if the first modifier is an adverb ending in -ly (quickly heated soup).

5. Use a hyphen to link parts of a fraction used as an adjective.
   
   two-thirds empty  one-half finished

   NOTE: Omit the hyphen if the fraction is used as a noun.

   One half of the bus was empty.

6. Use a hyphen to link the parts of a compound number between twenty-one and ninety-nine.
   
   forty-five seats  thirty-four years

7. Use a hyphen when a word is divided at the end of a line. Place a hyphen between syllables only. Do not hyphenate a word if doing so would leave just one letter on either line. If a word already contains a hyphen, divide it only at the hyphen.
   
   Today many people are still interested in the trapper's independent life style.

   Everyone seems to be interested in electronic gadgetry and state-of-the-art computers.

8. Use hyphens to distinguish between two words that are spelled similarly and might be confused.
   
   m-e-e-t is not the same as m-e-a-t

9. Use a hyphen to further clarity and readability.
   
   re-cover (as opposed to recover)  de-escalate
**Exercise:** Insert hyphens in the following sentences where they are needed.

**EXAMPLE:** The team's owner manager was arrested for gambling.  
(Insert a hyphen between owner and manager: owner-manager.)

1. There are at least twenty five ways to complete that project.

2. The verb is spelled d e v i s e, the noun, d e v i c e.

3. The team had a pre game meeting in the locker room.

4. The nineteen eighties was a time of political conservatism.

5. Ninety seven people applied for one job opening at the bank.

6. I read pages 491-543 in my history text last night.

7. The man made virus was barely contained.

8. The strong anti-inflation measures were largely ineffective.

9. There is much pro Israeli sentiment in the American government.

10. Joel Barlow (1754-1812) is a little known American poet.

11. The day to day figures looked good for the new company.

**ANSWERS:**

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<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>twenty-five</td>
<td>6. 491-543</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>d-e-v-i-s-e, d-e-v-i-c-e</td>
<td>7. man-made</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>pre-game</td>
<td>8. anti-inflation</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>nineteen-eighties</td>
<td>9. pro-Israeli</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>ninety-seven</td>
<td>10. (1754-1812), little-known</td>
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