

Hyphens (-), en-dashes (–) and em-dashes (—)

| | How to | When to | Examples |
|---------|---|---|--|
| Hyphen | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some prefixes (check your dictionary) • Some suffixes (check your dictionary) • Adjectival phrase, when followed by a noun • Adverbial phrase, when followed by a noun (unless adverb ends in <i>ly</i>) • Age terms | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ex-employee.</i> • <i>hundred-odd</i> • <i>A decision-making</i> body <i>An over-the-counter</i> drug • <i>A lesser-paid</i> position BUT: <i>A professionally presented</i> paper • <i>A three-year-old</i> child <i>A group of three-year-olds</i> BUT: The child is <i>three years old</i> |
| En-dash | Ctrl+hyphen (using number pad) Alt+0150 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number ranges • Multi-part adjectival phrases that include an open compound (e.g., Nobel Prize), when followed by a noun • Prefixes, when followed by an open compound (e.g., corporate executive) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pp. <i>1–10</i> <i>2005–2015</i> • <i>Nobel Prize–winning</i> scientist • <i>Ex–corporate executive</i> |
| Em-dash | Ctrl+Alt+hyphen (using number pad) Alt+0151 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To separate elements in a sentence—acts like commas or parentheses. Useful if you want to use commas or parentheses as well. (Note: Dashes are always more emphatic than commas.) • In place of a colon, at the end of a sentence. • In place of a colon in headings or bullet points. Useful if you want to use a colon as well. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These items—item 1, item 2 and item 3—were presented to the first group. • The jury reached a verdict—not guilty. • Chapter 3: Results—Case Study 1 |