

## Hyphens and Dashes

### Hyphen ( - )

Hyphens connect prefixes and suffixes to their root word.

They also connect words that are compound modifiers.

### Hyphens:

a pre-election rally

a walk-up apartment

a small-business owner

hazardous-waste removal

### Dashes ( – )

Use the en dash ( – ), which is the width of the letter *n*.

The longer em dash ( — ), which is the width of the letter *m*, is sometimes used on Web pages but never in news papers.

Use dashes to denote an abrupt change in thought in a sentence or to indicate an emphatic pause.

Use en dashes in datelines.

PORTLAND, Maine – Two cargo ships collided in the ...

Use en dashes to denote an abrupt change in thought in a sentence or to indicate an emphatic pause.

Smith offered a plan – it was unprecedented – to raise revenues.

I am going to South Korea next year – if the political unrest subsides.

**Use en dashes to offset phrases with commas  
in the middle of a sentence.**

wrong: Three of the Marx Brothers, Groucho,  
Harpo and Chico, starred in a movie  
with Marilyn Monroe.

right: Three of the Marx Brothers – Groucho,  
Harpo and Chico – starred in a movie  
with Marilyn Monroe.