

Hyphens Part 2

We're back with hyphens—there are just too many good tips to stop with just three. See [Part 1](#) for our previous hyphenation advice. And check out the Resources section below for a list of exhaustive guides for this extremely useful but oft-misused piece of punctuation. Remember: We need hyphens! Working twenty four-hour shifts is not the same as working twenty-four hour shifts or twenty-four-hour shifts.

1) A hyphen is not the same thing as a dash.

Hyphens connect words to make them more understandable. There are two types of dashes of different lengths:

- the *en* dash (–) is used for ranges
- the *em* dash (—) is probably what you think of when you think “dash”

En dash: The recipe calls for 1–2 teaspoons of salt.

Em dash: We'll have the results of the tests soon—if the laboratory is open.

Hyphen: CDC just completed construction on a state-of-the-art laboratory building.

Don't use en and em dashes interchangeably—see [4 Methods for Inserting a Dash in Word](#) if you need help typing them.

*Note: do not use spaces on either side of a hyphen, en dash, or em dash.

2) Don't capitalize the second part of hyphenated words.

Follow-up on the AIDS Vaccine

Long-term Effects of Radiation Exposure

3) In spelled-out common fractions, hyphenate only if the fraction modifies a noun.

Patients have adverse reactions to the medication in one third of the cases.

A two-thirds majority is needed. (NOT two-third)

Resources:

- [Chicago Manual of Style: Hyphens, En Dashes, Em Dashes](#)
- [Grammarly: When to Use a Hyphen](#)
- [Grammarist: Hyphen Rules and Usage with Examples](#)