



VIDEO & PODCAST TRANSCRIPT #022

When to Use a HYPHEN, an EN DASH, and an EM DASH

Slide 2:

The hyphen is found next to the zero on the keyboard.

Slide 3:

The en dash (width of a letter N) is found by enabling Num Lock, Alt, and typing 0150 on the numeric keypad.

Slide 4:

The em dash (width of a letter M) is found by enabling Num Lock, Alt, and typing 0151 on the numeric keypad.

Slide 5:

So a hyphen is the shortest, an en dash is longer, and an em dash is the longest.

Slide 6:

1. Use a hyphen (-) to: join two or more words into one

Slide 7:

The picture shows a box of chocolates.

The sentence reads: Chocolate-covered nuts can be irresistible!

Note the hyphen between chocolate and covered.

Slide 8:

2. Use a hyphen (-) to: divide a word into parts

Slide 9:

The picture shows a badly worn armchair dumped in the desert.

The sentence reads: Don't waste your money on re-covering this chair!

Note the hyphen between re and covering.

Slide 10:

Note: Re-cover here means to cover again, or renew the upholstery. Recover, without the hyphen, means to get back, to retrieve. The hyphen makes the meaning of the sentence clear.

Slide 11:

3. Use a hyphen (-) to: divide a word at the end of a line. This should be done between syllables.

Slide 12:

The picture shows a man with his donkey near water.

The sentence reads: A donkey can be a very slow form of trans-port.

Note the hyphen between trans and port.

Slide 13:

Use an en dash (–) between numbers or date ranges

Slide 14:

The picture shows London Bridge Hospital.

The caption reads: Visiting Times: 2 p.m.–8 p.m.

Slide 15:

The next example shows a picture of Margaret Thatcher who was the Prime Minister of the UK for many years.

The caption reads: Margaret Thatcher 1925–2013

Slide 16:

Note: If the word "from" is used before the number or date range, use "to" instead of an en-dash, e.g. "from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m."

Also, if the word "between" is used before the number or date range, use "and" instead of an en-dash, e.g. "between 2001 and 2011."

Slide 17:**1. Use an em dash (—) to:**

set off words for emphasis

Slide 18:

The picture shows a man waiting at an airport.

The sentence reads: It turned out to be a long wait—a very long wait!

Slide 19:

2. Use an em dash (—): before a list

Slide 20:

The picture shows a variety of ice creams.

The sentence reads: There were some great new flavours, not just the usual—chocolate, strawberry and vanilla!

Slide 21:

3. Use an em dash (—) to: indicate a change of thought, often abrupt or sudden

Slide 22:

The picture shows a luxury car, a Bugatti.

The sentence reads: He arrived in his new car—and what a car!

Slide 23:

Note: Use an em dash instead of a colon (:) if you want to be less formal.

Use an em dash instead of parenthesis () if you want the following words to be stronger and less subtle than if they were in parenthesis.

Slide 24:

Now test yourself!

Should you use a hyphen, an en dash, or an em dash . . .

Slide 25:

A donkey can be a very slow form of transport.

Slide 26:

Answer: hyphen. A hyphen is used to break words at the end of a line.

Slide 27:

He arrived in his new car—and what a car!

Slide 28:

Answer: Em dash. An em dash can be used when there is a sudden change of thought.

Slide 29:

Don't waste your money on re?covering this chair!

Slide 30:

Answer: Hyphen. A hyphen is used to divide a word into parts.

Slide 31:

It turned out to be a long wait?a very long wait!

Slide 32:

Answer: Em dash. An em dash is used to set off words for emphasis.

Slide 33:

Visiting Times: 2 p.m.?8 p.m.

Slide 34:

Answer: En dash. An en dash is used between numbers if there is no 'from' or 'between' before the numbers.

Slide 35:

There were some great new flavours, not just the usual?chocolate, strawberry and vanilla!

Slide 36:

Answer: Em dash. An em dash is used before a list.

Slide 37:

Chocolate?covered nuts can be irresistible!

Slide 38:

Answer: Hyphen. A hyphen is used to join words.

Slide 39:

Margaret Thatcher 1925?2013

Slide 40:

Answer: En dash. An en dash is used between dates.

Slide 41:

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