

# Hyphens



# The Hyphen



A hyphen is a punctuation mark that looks like a little horizontal line.

This is a hyphen. → -

Hyphens join together words or parts of words.

E.g. small-scale, re-formed.

Hyphens are very useful as they can help to clarify the meaning of a word or phrase and avoid ambiguity in writing. Look at the example below:

Paula decided to **resign** from her job.

Steve **re-signed** his contract.



# The Hyphen

## Creating a Compound Adjective

Hyphens can be used to link two separate words into a compound adjective before a noun.

The terrier padded across the room on its **bear-like** paws.



Georgina hung her **hot-pink** coat on the hook.



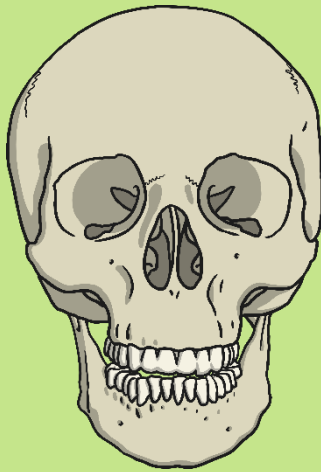
# The Hyphen

## Joining two nouns

Hyphens can be used to join together two nouns of equal importance to create a new noun or adjective.



Dan hung up a **skeleton-head** garland on Halloween.  
(This creates an adjective.)



The **student-teacher** taught the children about hyphens.  
(This creates a new noun.)





# The Hyphen



## Avoiding Awkward Letters or Sound Combinations

Hyphens can be used to avoid combining letters and sounds which could be awkward to say or write without a hyphen.

The children seemed incapable of **co-operating** with each other.



The policeman called for help to **de-escalate** the situation.



Hyphens are often used in this way to join prefixes to words when the prefix ends and the word starts with a vowel.

# The Hyphen



## Clarifying a Word Meaning

Hyphens can be used to ensure that the meaning of a word is clear. In these examples the words could mean different things without the hyphens.

Bill requested that the email be **re-sent**.



Dad decided to **re-press** his shirt as it was still creased.



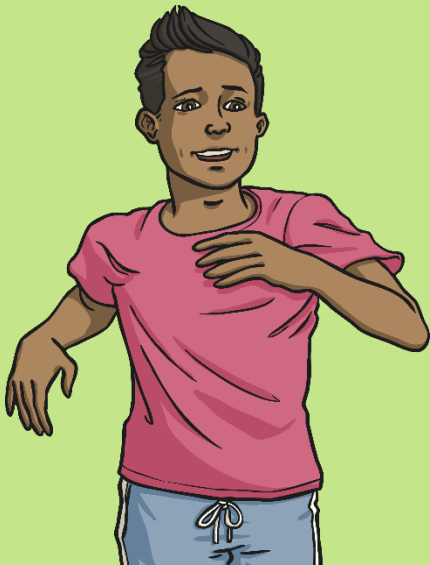
# The Hyphen

## In Numbers

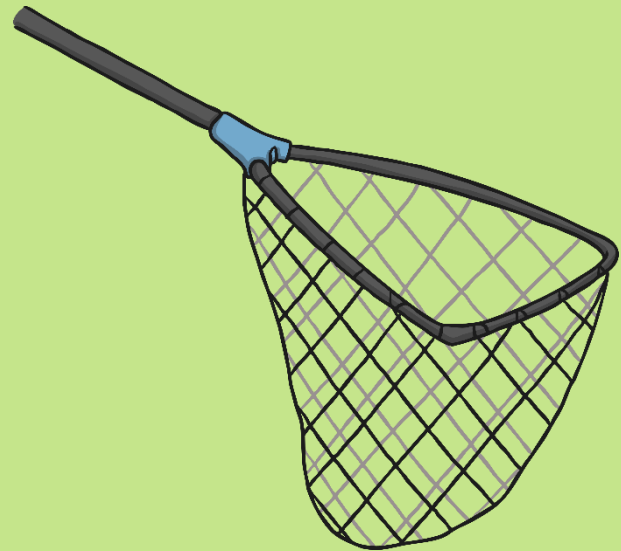
Hyphens should be used to join the tens and units in written numbers 21 – 99.



Sam came first in the marathon in which one hundred and **twenty-seven** people raced.



There are **thirty-two** known species of fish in our school pond.



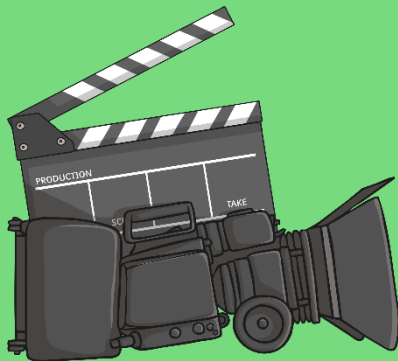


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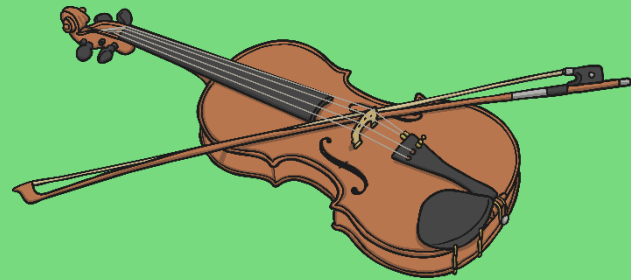
## Splitting a Word

Hyphens can be used to indicate that a word is not finished at the end of a line of writing.

Fiona thought that the new James Bond film was **stupendous-ly** enjoyable.



The waiters were asked to provide some light **entertainment** after the meal.



Make sure the word is split in a sensible place if using a hyphen this way.





# The Hyphen

## Create Informal Words/Phrases

Hyphens can be used in informal phrases to link words which go together to create a unit of meaning.

The song became a bit of a **free-for-all** with everyone singing at once.



The man is an **out-and-out** thief.



# Hyphen Huddles



Remember hyphens are used in different ways to help clarify the meaning of a sentence.

Can you think of examples for each of these:

Creating a compound adjective.

Joining two nouns.

Avoiding awkward letter or sound combinations.

To clarify a word meaning and avoid ambiguity.

In written numbers  
21-99.

To create informal words or phrases.

Read the word on the card your teacher gives you. Which of the categories above does your word belong to? See if you can find all the other children who have words belonging to the same category.