

The Hyphen,
En-Dash and
Em-Dash

*Magic Little
Dashes!*

Do you know the rules of usage for:

- hyphen

- en-dash

— em-dash

FOUR TIMES WHEN YOU SHOULD USE

The Hyphen



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The Hyphen

- HYPHENATED ADJECTIVE PHRASES
- HYPHENATED NUMBERS
- HYPHENS TO AVOID CONFUSION
- HYPHENATED PREFIXES

HYPHENATED ADJECTIVE PHRASES

- **Use a hyphen to join two or more words serving as a single adjective before a noun:**
 - a one-way street
 - chocolate-covered peanuts
 - well-known author
 - “Mulberry-cheeked boy”
- *However, when compound modifiers come after a noun, they are often not hyphenated:*
 - *The peanuts were chocolate covered.*
 - The author was well known.*

HYPHENATED ADJECTIVE PHRASES

Look at the differences in meaning!

- ***disease-causing poor nutrition***,
meaning poor nutrition that causes disease
- ***disease causing poor nutrition***,
meaning a disease that causes poor nutrition

HYPHENATED ADJECTIVE PHRASES

More!

- a *man-eating shark* is a shark that eats humans
- a *man eating shark* is a man who is eating shark meat

HYPHENATED ADJECTIVE PHRASES

And more. ...

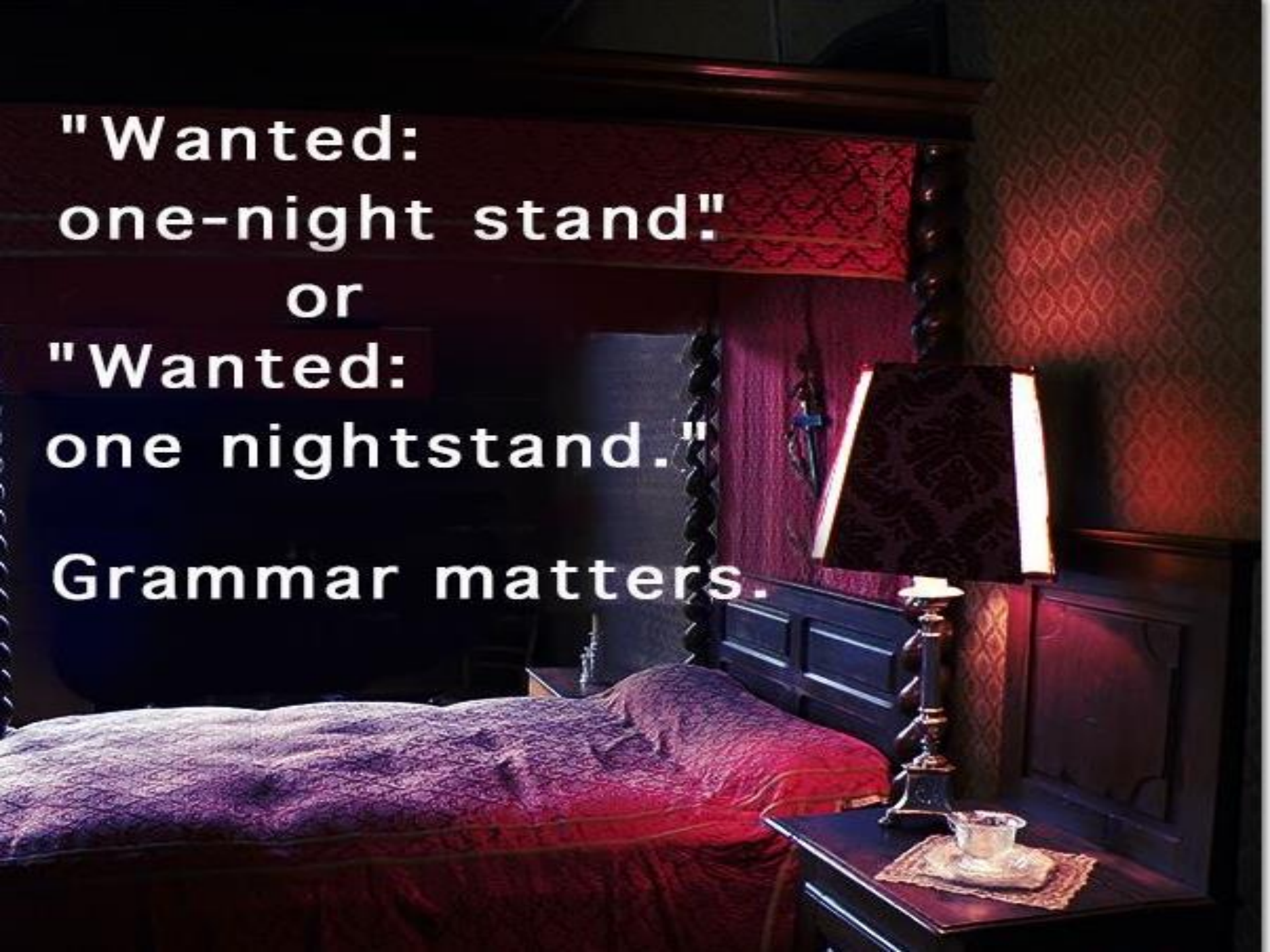
- a *blue green sea* is a contradiction; it's not possible
- a *blue-green sea* is a sea whose color is somewhere between blue and green

"Wanted:
one-night stand!"

or

"Wanted:
one nightstand."

Grammar matters.



GOD INSPIRED

fashion



Clothing | Accessories | Books | Gifts

cinnamon sugar
doughnuts

half baked
chocolate chip
cookie

STL gooey butter
cake

devil's food
chocolate cake

crème brûlée

HYPHENATED NUMBERS

- **Use a hyphen with compound numbers:**
 - forty-six
 - sixty-three
 - Our much-loved teacher was thirty-nine years old.

HYPHENS TO AVOID CONFUSION

- **Use a hyphen to avoid confusion or an awkward combination of letters:**
 - **re-sign a petition (vs. resign from a job)**
 - semi-independent (more than one i in row)
 - shell-like (too many Ls in a row)

HYPHENATED PREFIXES

- **Use a hyphen with the prefixes ex- (meaning former), self-, all-; with the suffix -elect; between a prefix and a capitalized word; and with figures or letters:**
 - self-assured
 - mid-September
 - all-inclusive
 - mayor-elect
 - anti-American
 - T-shirt
 - pre-Civil War
 - mid-1980s

Review

In your table group, come up with an example of each time you should use a hyphen.

- **HYPHENATED ADJECTIVE PHRASES**
- **HYPHENATED NUMBERS**
- **HYPHENS TO AVOID CONFUSION**
- **HYPHENATED PREFIXES**

PRACTICE EXERCISE

Directions: Add hyphens where needed or circle extra hyphens. Put a C at the end of the sentence if it is correct.

Ex: He used twenty-three apples for the pies. _____

1. Martin is on anti-inflammatory medication. _____
2. There are sixty seven people waiting in line. _____
3. Who do you think he will ask to be his Vice-President? _____
4. We live in a post-September 11th era. _____
5. Robert's ex girlfriend called him last night. _____
6. Heather's mom thinks she lacks self confidence. _____
7. The Civil War took place in the nineteenth century. _____
8. His was an all state running back his senior year in high school. _____
9. Mom will turn forty-six this August. _____
10. The other day, when it was hot and humid, Robert and I went swimming. _____

PRACTICE EXERCISE

Directions: In this paragraph, circle any place where a hyphen is needed. Mark out any unneeded hyphens.

Although there has always been tension between us, we have some-how managed to find a way to make things work. I don't think I'll ever go so far as to say that Jack fully-likes me, but I do think he knows that I am not going anywhere. When I walk in the door, he comes over to greet me, and sometimes, usually when he knows nobody is looking, Jack will-come and sit next to me and let me pet his soft, blonde white fur. I know that he likes it when I rub under neath his chin, and when I do it's at moments like these when I'm finally-able to understand what it means to be a "dog person."

The Em-Dash



The Most Versatile Punctuation Mark

Fun facts: Charlotte Brontë uses an em-dash **1999** times in the novel *Jane Eyre*. Jane Austen uses an em-dash **395** times in *Pride and Prejudice*.

Em-Dash (—)

- Depending on the context, **the em-dash can take the place of commas, parentheses, or colons—in each case to slightly different effect.**

★ *Do not mistake the em-dash (—) for the slightly narrower en-dash (–) or the even narrower hyphen (-). Those marks serve different purposes.*

Em-dashes can replace commas.

- A pair of em-dashes can be used in place of commas to enhance readability. Note, however, that dashes are always *more emphatic* than commas.
- Example: **And yet, when the car was finally delivered—nearly three months after it was ordered—she decided she no longer wanted it, leaving the dealer with an oddly equipped car that would be difficult to sell.**

A pair of em-dashes can replace a pair of parentheses.

- *Dashes are considered less formal than parentheses; they are also more intrusive.* If you want to draw attention to the parenthetical content, use dashes. If you want to include the parenthetical content more subtly, use parentheses.
- Note that when dashes are used in place of parentheses, surrounding punctuation should be omitted. Compare the following examples.
 - Upon discovering the errors (all 124 of them), the publisher immediately recalled the books.
 - Upon discovering the errors—all 124 of them—the publisher immediately recalled the books.
- When used in place of parentheses at the end of a sentence, only a single dash is used.
 - After three weeks on set, the cast was fed up with his direction (or, rather, lack of direction).
 - After three weeks on set, the cast was fed up with his direction—or, rather, lack of direction.

The em-dash can replace a colon.

- The em-dash can be used in place of a colon when you want to emphasize the conclusion of your sentence. The dash is less formal than the colon.
 - After months of deliberation, the jurors reached a unanimous verdict—guilty.
 - The white sand, the warm water, the sparkling sun—this is what brought them to Hawaii.

For the punctuation pedants:

The En-dash (–)

- The en-dash (–) is wider than the hyphen (-) but narrower than the em-dash (—).
- The typical computer keyboard lacks a dedicated key for the en-dash, though most word processors provide a means for its insertion.
- **Span or range of numbers**
- The en-dash is used to represent a span or range of numbers, dates, or time.
- There should be no space between the en-dash and the adjacent material.
- Depending on the context, the en-dash is read as “to” or “through.”

How do I type the em-dash and the en-dash in MS Word?

- **Em-dash**

Automatically created in Word when you type “something–something”

–(word-hyphen-hyphen-word)

- **En-dash**

Automatically created in Word when you type “something – something”

–(word-space-hyphen-space-word)

Restate the rules of usage for:

- hyphen

- en-dash

— em-dash

Exit Slip: Side Two

- **Write sentence that correctly uses both an em-dash and a hyphen. Label each piece of punctuation.**
 - Super bonus challenge:** employ an en-dash in your sentence too. #punctuationgenius