Hyphens

Hyphens are primarily used to establish clarity. The following circumstances typically require the use of a hyphen.

- **Spelling out compound numbers**
  
  Ex: *Lou ate sixty-seven jelly beans.*

- **Distinguishing between two words with the same spelling.**
  
  Ex: *Jon must recover (find) the stereo speakers.* (v.) *Jon must re-cover (repair) the stereo speakers.*

- **Forming compound adjectives**
  (combining two adjectives or an adverb and an adjective to describe a noun).
  
  Ex: *Michael has the autograph of a well-known actor.*

- **Spelling out fractions**
  
  Ex: *He painted two-thirds of the room.*

- **Dividing a word at the end of a line**
  
  Ex: *A huge dog came running toward him.*

- **Connecting a series of numbers or dates**
  
  Ex: *Read pages 9-30; they cover American history from 1920-29.*

- **Connecting a prefix to a number or a capital letter**
  
  Ex: *Michael’s political views prove that he is pro-American.*
  
  *Color television was introduced post-1950.*

- **Connecting prefixes to words that begin with the same letter the prefix ends with**
  
  Ex: *The paper failed to submit, so a re-entry was necessary.*
  
  *Shannon’s ideas for the project were co-opted by her classmates.*

- **Connecting invented words or long phrases used as adjectives**
  
  Ex: *Sue has a holier-than-thou attitude.*

- **Using suspended compounds**
  
  Ex: *The couple wanted a one- or two-year lease on the apartment.*

- **Using "ex-" and "self-"**
  
  Ex: *Rita spoke to her ex-husband yesterday.*
  
  *Emily has a lot of self-pity.*