

# DASHES & HYPHENS

HOW & WHEN TO USE THEM



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# DID YOU KNOW?

There are actually **three** types of dashes used in typography :

- the shortest hyphen
- the medium "en" dash, and
- the longest "em" dash.

They each have a specific use and should be used appropriately.

AI continues to do whatever it wants with dashes, resulting in obvious, terrible AI-generated slop type.



# THE HYPHEN

## THE SHORTEST STRAW

### How to type:

Mac: ..... Hyphen key

PC: ..... Hyphen key

iOS & Android: ... Hyphen key

- Hyphens and half-words
- Phone numbers: 555-123-4567
- No spaces on either side
- Never use double hyphens -- ew.



# THE EN DASH

IT'S THE LENGTH OF AN 'N'

## How to type:

Mac: ..... Option-Hyphen

PC: ..... Alt+0150 on numpad

iOS & Android: ... Hold Dash, slide to –

- For ranges like 1922–2015
- This is the dash that traditionally divided thoughts – using a space on either side – to break up a sentence.



# THE EM DASH

GUESS HOW LONG IT IS?

## How to type:

Mac: ..... Option-Shift-Hyphen

PC: ..... Alt+0151 on numpad

iOS & Android: .. Hold Dash, slide to —

- Divide two thoughts—like a more dignified semicolon
- Use it sparingly and consistently
- Remember: There are **no spaces between em dashes.**

# TIPS

- Pick en or em and commit. Mixing them is a marker of bad typography and/or AI.
- The double hyphen -- is a typewriter workaround from 1910.
- While we're at it, stop double-spacing after punctuation, please.
- AI loves the em dash — improperly like this — desperately, compulsively, without restraint. You can add corrections to your overall AI generator settings.
- You can also divide thoughts with: colons, semicolons; but again sparingly and appropriately.

**Thank you for learning about Typography!**