



DeYoung Consulting Services

Helping People Learn up to Their Potential

Last month's writing tip focused on using hyphens for punctuating sentences and dividing words at the end of lines. Hyphens are also commonly used in compound words.

A compound word is a word comprised of two or more individual words. They can be written as one word (*bedroom*), two words (*post office*) or with a hyphen (*father-in-law*). Here are a few tips to help you know when to use a hyphen in compound words.

- Compound words should be hyphenated when used as an adjective before the word they are modifying, but not afterwards. For example:
The absent-minded professor started the fire.
The professor was very absent minded.
- Compound nouns typically need hyphens. Note the difference between *great-uncle* (the brother of one of your grandparents) and *great uncle* (the uncle you think is great).
- Prefixes and suffixes usually become part of the word, unless it involves a capitalized word. For example, *nonessential* isn't hyphenated, but *pro-Israeli* is.
- Hyphens are also used when spelling out numbers (*twenty-one*) or when used between a number and its unit of measurement (*10-foot ladder*).
- A hyphen is typically (but not always) used with the prefaces *ex* (ex-wife) and *self* (*self-control*).
- Finally, don't forget to continue the use of hyphens in a series of words. For example: *The preschool teacher taught three- and four-year-olds.*

If you find you are stumped on a particular hyphenation issue, consult your dictionary.

And if you're stumped on a particular training or curriculum issue, give me a call and I'll happily consult with you.

Karen DeYoung
DeYoung Consulting Services

DeYoung Consulting Services provides quality learning experiences for individuals and groups. We develop materials and activities that advance individual, team, and organizational learning. Our work is done with integrity, reliability, and accountability.

If you would like to be removed from this list, please send an email to deyoung4@aol.com and type "remove" in the subject. Or, just reply to this message.

DeYoung Consulting Services
Helping People Learn up to Their Potential
4834 Park Avenue
Minneapolis, MN 55417
(612) 822-8872
(612) 220-3440 mobile
deyoung4@aol.com