

Dashes

The **dash** can be used to show a sudden break in a sentence, to emphasize a word or clause, and to show that someone's speech is being interrupted. There is no space before or after a dash.

612.1 To Indicate a Sudden Break

A dash can be used to show a sudden break in a sentence.

The three of us came down with colds, lost our voices, and missed the football game—all because we had practiced in the rain.

612.2 For Emphasis

A dash may be used to emphasize or explain a word, a series of words, a phrase, or a clause.

Vitamins and minerals—important dietary supplements—can improve your diet.

The benefits of vitamin A—better vision and a stronger immune system—are well known.

612.3 To Indicate Interrupted Speech

Use a dash to show that someone's speech is being interrupted by another person.

Well—yes, I understand—no, I remember—oh—okay, thank you.

Parentheses

Parentheses are used around words that are included in a sentence to add information or to help make an idea clearer.

612.4 To Add Information

Use parentheses when adding information or clarifying an idea.

Cures for diseases (from arthritis to AIDS) may be found in plants in the rain forest.

Only about 10 percent (27,000) of the plant species in the world have been studied.

Dashes



Rewrite the sentences below, adding dashes where appropriate.

- Gingivitis that is, swollen gums is a common disease.
Gingivitis—that is, swollen gums—is a common disease.
- I was going to I mean I *am* going to take the subway.
- Only one thing will get Winifred to leave that island a hurricane.
- Excuse me yes, I know that have you but I okay.
- People's donations will fund this research research that could save many lives.
- Danielle, be sure to bundle up it's below zero out there.

Parentheses



Write the parts of the sentences below that should be enclosed in parentheses. Add the parentheses.

- Randall got a majority 62% of the votes in the class election.
 (62%)
- Derek acting totally unlike himself yelled at his friend.
- Genny wore her new shirt the sparkly blue one to the dance.
- Oliver's mom my aunt will drive us to the theater.
- John's constant itching led him to make an appointment with a dermatologist a skin doctor.
- Three northeastern states Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont had ice storms yesterday.