

Handling Hyphens

When you join two or more words to form a single modifier preceding a noun, add a temporary hyphen: *a two-year-old child*. If the same words appear after the noun, a hyphen is usually not necessary: *the child was two years old*. However, some compound modifiers are permanently hyphenated, such as *first-class*, *well-known*, *part-time*, and *old-fashioned*. Check a dictionary to be sure.

Hyphen Rules to Remember

- Do hyphenate a compound modifier before a noun. (*She ran a home-based business.*)
- Do hyphenate permanent compounds before or after a noun (*The office was old-fashioned.*)
- Do not hyphenate combinations including adverbs that end in *ly* (*Our newly decorated offices look great.*)
- Do not add hyphens involving prefixes such as *non*, *pre*, *over*, and *super* (*nonabrasive*, *nonbearing*, *preseason*, *overpaid*, and *supersmart*).

Add or delete hyphens as appropriate in the following sentences. Mark "C" if a sentence is correct.

1. Managers must revise the company's five year business plan.
2. The commission will consider every taxpayer inquiry on a case by case basis.
3. We sought up to date information from the consultant who was well known for his expertise.
4. Only a highly regarded architect will be considered for the proposed building.
5. The contract included a number of non-binding but important suggestions.
6. All employees participate in on the job training after being hired.
7. The doctor's receptionist made a follow up appointment for next month.
8. It is the receptionist's job to follow up after a doctor performs some procedures.
9. Even the most commonly used ingredients were unavailable after the storm.
10. Although I worked only part time, I was given two weeks of vacation time.
11. Antonio used his two week vacation to travel to Alaska.
12. Attorneys provided many documents in the pre-trial period of the case.
13. We were afraid the manager would give another long winded speech.
14. If you follow the step by step instructions, you will have no trouble assembling the bicycle.
15. Most speakers provide a question and answer period after they finish.