

Hyphens are used to connect words. In the past they were used far more often than we use them today and some words lose their hyphens through common usage. However, they are still a very important part of our language as is shown in the sentences below:

1. Liam went to the zoo and saw a man-eating penguin.
2. Liam went to the zoo and saw a man eating penguin.

In the first sentence Liam saw a penguin that eats people whereas in the second sentence he saw a man who was eating penguin.



Hyphens are used to connect words that come before a noun to make them act as one idea, this is called a compound adjective.

For example:

I have a part-time job.

She was a well-known actress.

A hyphen is not usually needed where the compound comes after the noun.

I have a job that is part time.

As an actress, she was well known.



Useful tips: 'very' and adverbs ending 'ly' should not be hyphenated, but other 'ly' words can be.

Rewrite the following sentences and put a hyphen in the correct place. The first one has been done for you.

1. I am wearing a short sleeved shirt.

I am wearing a short-sleeved shirt.



2. My aunty sent me a hand made card.

.....

3. A long haired pony was in the field.

.....

4. My dad booked us a last minute holiday to Spain.

.....

5. In Kirsty's dream she was chased by a green eyed monster.

.....

6. I stuck a second class stamp on the postcard that I sent to my friend.

.....

7. I stood in the queue behind a well dressed woman.

.....

8. Today we bought a brand new television for our front room.

.....

Rewrite the following sentences putting the compound adjective with a hyphen in front of a noun. The first one has been done for you.

1. We booked a holiday at the last minute.

We booked a last-minute holiday.



2. The mirror I bought was old fashioned.

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3. The plot was good but the book was only half written.

.....

4. I have a job that is part time.

.....

5. When I was little I had clothes that were second hand.

.....

6. David implemented some ideas that were time saving for the company.

.....

7. We have got a puppy that is very well behaved.

.....

8. I have just installed a program on my computer that is up to date.

.....

Hyphens before nouns (compound adjectives)

English worksheets from urbrainy.com



Read the following sentences and put a hyphen in where there is a compound adjective before a noun.



1. We have five pairs of left handed scissors in our classroom.

.....

2. Our teacher is very kind hearted.

.....

3. I ordered a mouth watering pizza from the café.

.....

4. We had to wait in a two hour queue to get into the show.

.....

5. I have been given a pile of homework which seems never ending.

.....

6. I went to see my neighbour who is highly respected in the community.

.....

7. I go to a Welsh speaking school.

.....

8. We watched the record breaking event from the upstairs window.

.....

Name:

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Answers:

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2. My aunty sent me a hand-made card.
3. A long-haired pony was in the field.
4. My dad booked us a last-minute holiday to Spain.
5. In Kirsty's dream she was chased by a green-eyed monster.
6. I stuck a second-class stamp on the postcard that I sent to my friend.
7. I stood in the queue behind a well-dressed woman.
8. Today we bought a brand-new television for our front room.

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Answers should be similar to the answers below and must include a compound adjective in front of a noun.

2. I bought an old-fashioned mirror.
3. The plot was good but it was only a half-written book.
4. I have a part-time job.
5. I had second-hand clothes when I was little.
6. David implemented some time-saving ideas for the company.
7. We have got a very well-behaved puppy.
8. I have just installed an up-to-date program on my computer.

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1. We have five pairs of left-handed scissors in our classroom.
2. Our teacher is very kind hearted.
3. I ordered a mouth-watering pizza from the café.
4. We had to wait in a two-hour queue to get into the show.
5. I have been given a pile of homework which seems never ending.
6. I went to see my neighbour who is highly respected in the community.
7. I go to a Welsh-speaking school.
8. We watched the record-breaking event from the upstairs window.