

Hyphens are used to connect words. This is for a number of reasons including: to describe something for which no other word exists, to help with pronunciation and to reduce confusion over the meaning. In the past they were used far more often than we use them today and some words lose their hyphens through common usage.

Hyphens are used in compound adjectives that describe fractions, measurements, numbers (from twenty-one to a hundred), ages and lengths of time, for example:

'two-thirds'

'3-D shape'

'five-and-a-half sides'

'eighty-seven'

'100-year-old'

If the hyphen is left out the meaning can be unclear, for example:

'500-year-old houses are prone to damp.' This means that houses which are 500 years old are prone to damp.

'500 year old houses are prone to damp.' This is not so clear and could mean that 500 houses that are a year old are prone to damp.

Hyphens are not used when the compound adjective comes after the noun, for example:

'Houses that are 500 years old are prone to damp.'



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



1. I like the new 12 sided pound coin.

I like the new 12-sided pound coin.

2. Yesterday we learnt all about 2 D shapes in maths.

.....

3. I live in a 350 year old house.

.....

4. I have a two year old sister called Polly.

.....

5. I called downstairs to say that my homework is two thirds finished.

.....

6. Jo wrote a short story that is twelve and a half pages long.

.....

7. Matthew was reading page ninety nine of his book.

.....

8. I have an eighty year old neighbour who likes gardening.

.....



Rewrite the following sentences and put a hyphen in the correct place.

1. There is a 90 degree angle in this triangle.

.....

2. Five eights of the children in my school take a packed lunch.

.....

3. I went to visit a 900 year old castle at the weekend.

.....

4. We got stuck in a queue and were two and a half hours late for the flower show.

.....

5. I have a 7 sided coin in my purse, can you guess what it is?

.....

6. My I.T. teacher has a special 3 D printer.

.....

7. We have a twelve year old pet rabbit.

.....

8. I counted twenty two sweets in the jar.

.....

Here are some hyphenated numbers/measurements.  
Write your own sentences including one of them in  
each sentence.



500-year-old

6-sided

2-D

45-degree

fifty-five

one-third

1. ....

.....

2. ....

.....

3. ....

.....

4. ....

.....

5. ....

.....

6. ....

.....

Answers:

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2. Yesterday we learnt all about 2-D shapes in maths.
3. I live in a 350-year-old house.
4. I have a two-year-old sister called Polly.
5. I called downstairs to say that my homework is two-thirds finished.
6. Jo wrote a short story that is twelve-and-a-half pages long.
7. Matthew was reading page ninety-nine of his book.
8. I have an eighty-year-old neighbour who likes gardening.

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1. There is a 90-degree angle in this triangle.
2. Five-eighths of the children in my school take a packed lunch.
3. I went to visit a 900-year-old castle at the weekend.
4. We got stuck in a queue and were two-and-a-half hours late for the flower show.
5. I have a 7-sided coin in my purse, can you guess what it is?
6. My I.T. teacher has a special 3-D printer.
7. We have a twelve-year-old pet rabbit.
8. I counted twenty-two sweets in the jar.

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Six sentences to include the following hyphenated numbers/measurements:

500-year-old

6-sided

2-D

45-degree

fifty-five

one-third