Ellipses (…), hyphens(-), parentheses ( ), and dashes –

Ellipses (…) are primarily <u>used for dramatic pauses</u> in informal writing. In formal essays, ellipses are used to <u>show the omission of a word or words</u>. In Greek it translates into 'omission' or 'falling short'.

In informal writing the ellipsis is used to show a pause in the middle or at the end of a sentence.

The thing … about ellipses is… that… I'm sorry. Here's a joke. An ellipsis walks into a bar…

They can also be used to show the loss of a train of thought.

Oh, so he's trying to say that ellipsis is used… nope, I've lost it.

In formal writing it should be used to show that you have omitted something from a quote (but only the middle of the quote).

Kurt Vonnegut tells us "True terror is to wake up … and discover that your high school class is running the country." (I have omitted 'one day'.)

You should never put quotes at the beginning *or* end of a quote, even if you have omitted words from there.

<u>Hyphens (-) are used to create compound terms</u>. *Eye-opener, check-in and free-for-all are all compound terms.*

Use a dictionary and then your own judgement if you are not sure whether to hyphenate a compound. The point of punctuation is to make language easier to understand.

<u>Parentheses and dashes (here we're talking about em dashes) are really just used to emphasise something.</u>

The above sentence would still make sense without the statement in parentheses. This is the rule. If the sentence doesn't make *grammatical* sense without what's contained in brackets, then you should not have used brackets.

<u>Dashes can be used *instead of* parentheses and *instead of* commas – if you wish – at the beginning or end of a sentence.</u> Please note though, that dashes will be more emphatic than commas.

One of my pupils, who's given me hassle all week, had a fantastic lesson today.

One of my pupils – who's given me hassle all week – had a fantastic lesson today.

Finally, dashes can be used instead of colons (:) to emphasise the end of a sentence. Now you know how to use dashes- for emphasis.

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