

## DASHES

Dashes should look like this—not this - in your paper.

Remember when using the hyphen, the en dash, or the em dash, **you should put no space either before or after them**. The only exception is with a hanging hyphen (see, for example, the word "nineteenth" in the phrase "nineteenth- and twentieth-century literature"). By definition, a hanging hyphen will have a space after it but not before it.

The em dash is the mark of punctuation most of us think of when we hear the term "dash" in regard to a sentence. It is significantly longer than the hyphen. **We use the em dash to create a strong break in the structure of a sentence. Dashes can be used in pairs like parentheses—that is, to enclose a word, or a phrase, or a clause—or they can be used alone to detach one end of a sentence from the main body.** Dashes are particularly useful in a sentence that is long and complex or in one that has a number of commas within it.

When we confuse the em dash with the hyphen, we make a sentence virtually impossible to read. Notice the sentence containing dashes in the preceding paragraph. If we had used a hyphen in place of each dash, it would seem as though we had hyphenated two pairs of words in the sentence: "parentheses-that" and "clause-or," neither pair of which makes any sense.

**To type a dash**, type two hyphens, which will turn into a dash if you have your Autotext set that way, or use Insert, Special Character, Symbol, em dash.

## ELLIPSIS POINTS

**There should be a space before and after each dot in a set of ellipsis points.**

When a complete sentence is followed by ellipsis points it should be immediately followed by the proper punctuation (whether a period, question mark, or exclamation point), with no intervening space.

Right:        John . . . know who they were.  
                 John Knew them. . . . He had seen them before.  
                 John, the youngest, . . . left home.

Wrong:       John...knew who they were.  
                 John ... knew who they were.