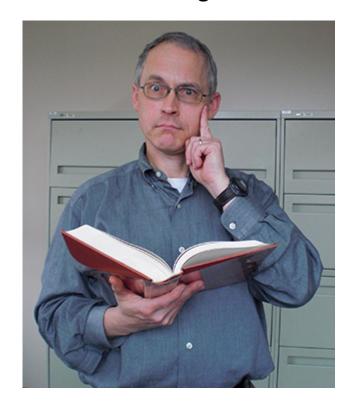




# **Word for Word**

## Hyphenating temporary compounds: A low-stress guide



A hyphen is needed to join two or more words that function as a modifier for a noun that follows them.

#### **Examples:**

It was a peer-reviewed journal.

The patient had *cancer-related* symptoms.

We recommend *breast-conserving* surgery.

I read a well-written article.

The old book had black-and-white illustrations.

That's simple, right? But there's a twist: When the same words follow the noun that they modify, the hyphen is not needed—unless, of course, the term is normally hyphenated (e.g., right-handed, brother-in-law).

#### **Examples:**

The journal was peer reviewed.

The symptoms were cancer related.

The surgery was *breast conserving*.

The article was well written.

The illustrations were in black and white.

Another complication: A hyphen is not used after an adverb that was formed by adding -/y to an adjective (e.g., largely, rapidly).

#### **Example:**

highly aggressive subtype (not highly-aggressive subtype)

And there's one more twist: When the modifying words are a commonly used term that is normally written without a hyphen, they are not hyphenated, even when they precede a noun that they modify. A medical dictionary can provide guidance.

### **Examples:**

sickle cell disease (not sickle-cell disease)
signet ring cell (not signet-ring cell)

### **Bibliography**

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