

Chapters Five-Six

Assessment Preparation: Using Hyphens and Dashes

Two powerful punctuation marks can spice up your writing: the dash (—) and the hyphen (-).

The dash is a great punctuation mark that adds drama to your sentences. Use the dash to show there is an abrupt change in your sentence. Perhaps you want to stop the reader part way through a sentence to emphasize what's coming next—use a dash to do that.

Sometimes you'll want to use a pair of dashes to completely set off a phrase or clause. For example: "Miss Bessie strolled over to a greenish patch—most of the field was brown and dry—and yanked up a mouthful." One word of caution: dashes are such fun to use, you may find you're using them in every sentence. Be careful not to overuse them or your writing will sound choppy.

A hyphen is one short mark - .

A dash is two hyphens next to each other —.

Most word processors will automatically combine two hyphens into a dash.

The hyphen has more uses (and rules) than dashes.

- You may find you need to use a hyphen when you're writing something by hand. If your writing goes to the end of the line and a word won't completely fit, use a hyphen to break the word apart. You must break the word between syllables, and you cannot break apart a one-syllable word. If you're not sure where to break a word into syllables, check the dictionary.

For example: Mrs. Snippets likes to open her *um-brella* in the elevator.

- Use a hyphen to write out numbers between twenty-one and ninety-nine.

For example: Mrs. Snippets has a collection of *fifty-three* umbrellas.

- Use a hyphen in compound nouns. Some nouns are always hyphenated (mother-in-law, x-ray, jack-in-the-box, t-shirt); if you're not sure if a noun is hyphenated, look it up in the dictionary.

For example: Mrs. Snippets is a champion *tic-tac-toe* player.

- Use hyphens to connect two or more adjectives before a noun. Use this rule when the adjectives work together to describe something.

For example: Mrs. Snippets loves her *rust-covered* truck. (You can test this rule by separating the adjectives. Mrs. Snippets loves her rust truck? Mrs. Snippets loves her covered truck? It is clear that the two adjectives need to work together to describe the truck. Use a hyphen to keep them together.)

Name _____ Period _____

Part I: Skim through Chapters 5 and 6. Locate examples of the uses of dashes and hyphens in *Bridge to Terabithia*. Write the sentences you find that include your examples on the lines below. Include the page number where you found the example.

1. A dash: page _____ :

2. A hyphen used to connect two adjectives that are working together to describe a noun:

page _____ :

3. A hyphen used to break a word between two lines: page _____ :

Part II: Your Turn: Use each of the rules on page 39 to write your own sentences. You may write your sentences about Mrs. Snippets or make up your own original sentences.

4. Use a dash. _____

5. Use a hyphen to break a word into syllables at the end of the line. _____

6. Use a hyphen to write numbers (21-99). _____

7. Use a hyphen to write a compound noun. _____

8. Use a hyphen to write two or more adjectives before a noun. _____

Part III: Choose three sentences to rewrite on a strip of paper or index card. Trade sentences with another student. Identify how the hyphen or dash is used. When you get your own sentences back, check the answers. Was the student able to correctly identify the way you used the dash and hyphen?

Part IV: Write a paragraph or two about Mrs. Snippets and her umbrella collection. Try to include each use of hyphens and dashes in your short story.