the **mechanic’s** wrench **Gloria’s** backpack the **tree’s** leaves Mr. **Jones’** iPod

**Moses’** tablets **Carlos’s** notebook Mrs. **Gonzales’s** maid Ned **Stanis’s** boots

### *Possessive of Plural Nouns*

The possessive of plural nouns ending in *s* is formed by adding only the apostrophe. All other plural nouns take *’s*.

the **Harlands’** trip the **trees’** leaves

**children’s** shoes **men’s** sports wear the **teams’** scores **women’s** networks

### *Possessive of Indeﬁnite and Personal Pronouns*

Indeﬁnite pronouns (*everyone, no one, anybody, everybody, someone, some- body, one*) require an apostrophe to form the possessive. However, personal possessive pronouns (*his, hers, theirs, your/yours, my/mine, our/ours*) do not use an apostrophe.

Is this **someone’s** book? Yes, the book is **hers**. I’ll take **anyone’s** ideas. **Your** ideas are great.

### *Individual and Joint Possession*

To show *joint possession* by two or more organizations, companies, or indi- viduals, only the last word takes *’s* or an apostrophe. In cases of *individual possession*, both nouns and pronouns take *’s* or the apostrophe only.

**Joint possession: Lin and Chan’s** bicycle (The bicycle is

owned by both Lin and Chan.)

the **vice presidents’** ofﬁce (The ofﬁce is used by more than one vice president.)

**IBM and Xerox’s** new venture (The two companies are working together on one venture.)

**Individual possession: Lin’s** and **Chan’s** bicycles (Notice the plural

noun after the names—a clue that each person owns a bicycle.)

her **father-in-law’s** and **brother’s** golf scores

**Texaco’s** and **BP’s** annual reports

### *Units of Measure as Possessive Adjectives*

Units of measure such as *day, week, yard, cent,* and *hour* take *’s* or an apos- trophe when used as possessive adjectives.

a **moment’s** peace ten **minutes’** work a **month’s** pay three **weeks’** pay

a **dollar’s** worth two **cents’** worth

### *Plural Forms of Symbols*

The apostrophe or *’s* is used to form the plural of letters, numbers, signs, symbols, and words referred to as words.

All the **R’s** in this article were printed backward. Mark these items with **X’s** and those with **O’s**. Your **3’s** look like **8’s**.

How many **and’s** can you put in one sentence? The printer smudged all the **g’s** in my report. We can use **+’s** and **\*’s** in the chart.

### *Contractions*

The apostrophe is also used to indicate letters that have been omitted to form contractions of verbs. Contractions are used in informal writing and conversation, but are generally avoided in formal writing.

**She will** come tomorrow.

**She’ll** come tomorrow. (*wi* in *will* omitted)

**I have** not heard from him.

**I’ve** not heard from him. (*ha* in *have* omitted)

**Formal writing: Do not** send the second shipment by UPS.

**Informal writing: Don’t** send the second shipment by UPS. (*o* in

*not* omitted)

## Hyphen

*Hyphens* are used to join two or more words that are used as a single unit, to join continuous numbers, to connect some preﬁxes and sufﬁxes with their nouns, to divide words at the end of a line, to link two last names, and to avoid confusing or awkward word constructions.

### *Compound Numbers and Fractions*

Hyphens are used with compound numbers from twenty-one to ninety- nine and with fractions used as adjectives. However, when fractions serve as nouns, no hyphen is used.

**twenty-one** gun salute a **two-thirds** majority

**sixty-ﬁve** and over a glass **three-ﬁfths** full (But do not

hyphenate *three ﬁfths* when used as a noun, such as *three ﬁfths* of the voters.)

### *Continuous Numbers*

Hyphens are used to link dates of birth and death, pages of material, scores of games, and other instances in which the relationship between the num- bers needs to be shown.

Christoper Reeve, “Superman” (**1952-2004**) Read pages **15-32** in your statistics book.

The Bears beat the Rams **21-0.**

All the children ages **8-12** are eligible for camp.

### *Preﬁxes and Sufﬁxes*

Preﬁxes *ex, self,* and *all* and the sufﬁx *elect* always take a hyphen whether they are used as modiﬁers or as nouns. Hyphens also are used with all pre- ﬁxes before proper nouns and adjectives.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| self-esteem | secretary-elect | all-Canadian team |
| ex-director | all-encompassing | pro-French |

### *Compound Adjectives*

When compound adjectives are used before the noun, they are hyphen- ated. When they follow the noun, no hyphen is used. If one of the modi- ﬁers is an adverb ending in *ly*, do not use a hyphen in the compound adjective.

a **decision-making** process a process for **decision making**

a **well-run** program a program that is **well run**

a **city-owned** business a business that is **city owned organically grown** fruit fruit that is **organically grown publicly owned** parks parks that are **publicly owned**

### *Word Division*

Hyphens are used to divide words at the end of a line as a reminder that the rest of the word is to follow. Words cannot be divided arbitrarily but only between syllables. See the section on Word Division in Chapter 5 for rules on dividing words at the end of a line.

We were almost in Niles **Town- ship** when our car broke down. Sam didn’t really want to **con- tinue** the trip, but I did.

### *Hyphenated Names*

Hyphens are used to join two last names.

Karen Norridge-Adams Mr. Michael Harrington-Kelly the Henderson-Smythes Mr. and Mrs. Burns-Schroeder

### *To Avoid Confusion*

Use hyphens to prevent confusion or awkwardness in sentences.

re-creation (prevents confusion with *recreation*)

anti-intellectual (avoids awkwardness of *antiintellectual*) sub-subentry (avoids confusion of *subsubentry*)

## Dash

A *dash* indicates a break in thought or the addition of information within a sentence or at its end. A dash is typed using two hyphens (although most word-processing programs can be set up to automatically insert a dash when you type two hyphens). There is no space before or after the punc- tuation mark.

The woman came running around the corner—I couldn’t see her face—and disappeared down the alley.

This building—and every building on the street—will be torn down.

Marsha Nagib—you know her, I think—told me we might close early today.

A dash can be used to mean *namely, that is,* or *in other words* to intro- duce additional information or an explanation.

I thought about taking another route—the one through West Virginia. There’s only one way to win—don’t play the game.

## Parentheses

*Parentheses* enclose material that is an interruption of the text but adds information.

The park (in Washington) is always crowded in summer. I know the answer (I think) to the ﬁnal question.

If the material enclosed falls at the end of a sentence, the end mark is placed *outside* the closing parenthesis. If the material is a complete sen- tence within itself, the end mark is placed *inside* the closing parenthesis.

We provide a complete list of stores (see our website). We provide a complete list of stores. (See our website.)

## Brackets

Use *brackets* to enclose additions to quoted material. These additions, made by editors or writers, usually clarify or comment on the material.

“Mark Twain said it [the river] taught him all he ever knew about life.”

“Virginia Woolf lived with him [Lytton Strachey] while recovering from her illness.”

“There were few Esquimouxs [sic] living in the region we explored.”

Brackets are also used to enclose material that falls within material already enclosed by parentheses.

The fall sales records are encouraging (see page 33, Monthly Sales [Table 2.1] for a detailed breakdown by product line).

## Ellipses

*Ellipses* indicate that material has been omitted from a quotation or quoted material.

**Original:** This book describes the author’s visit to Nepal and renders scenes of the rugged, mountainous countryside that will remain in the reader’s mind forever.

**Condensed:** This book . . . renders scenes . . . that will remain in the reader’s mind forever.

When words are omitted at the end of a sentence, use an end mark plus the ellipses.

**Condensed:** This book . . . renders scenes of the rugged, mountainous countryside. . . .

## Italics

*Italics* are used to indicate emphasis, to mark foreign terms and expres- sions not commonly used, and to highlight titles of publications and names of certain vehicles such as ships, spacecraft, and the like.

### *Emphasis*

Occasionally, italics are used to stress certain words or phrases. This usage is more common in dialogue than in formal writing and should be kept to a minimum.

“I didn’t want *blue* paint; I wanted *lavender* paint!”

“Mr. Lloyd, you told the prosecutor that you didn’t meet Mrs. Young

*until last month.* Is that right?”

On the basis of the ﬁeld inspector’s report, I recommend that *we shut down offshore drilling platform #45*.

### *Foreign Words and Phrases*

Foreign words and phrases that are not part of common usage are italicized.

The motto of the Marine Corps is *Semper Fidelis*—always faithful. As they say, *ende gut, alles gut*: all’s well that ends well.

However, many foreign words have been in common use long enough that they are no longer italicized. Check the dictionary for the latest usage.

Her paintings were very **avant-garde**.

At one time the motto **caveat emptor**—let the buyer beware—was the rule in business.

Her clothes are **chic**, her decor **passé**.

The military **junta** declared a 7:00 pm curfew.

### *Titles*

The titles of plays, books, magazines, newspapers, movies, and other types of periodicals and publications are italicized when they appear in print. If the ﬁrst word of a title is *a, an,* or *the,* it is italicized only if it is part of the actual name.

*The Wall Street Journal* (newspaper) *Esquire* (magazine) the *Los Angeles Times* (newspaper) *Spider-Man* (movie) *Angels in America* (play) *Redbook* (magazine)

*The Insider* (corporate publication) *The Da Vinci Code* (book)

*Editorial Eye* (newsletter)

### *Vehicles*

Use italics for the names of ships, spacecraft, airplanes, and other well- known vehicles.

the battleship *Excalibur* the spaceship *Enterprise* the shuttle *Columbia*

the *Titanic*

the President’s jet *Air Force One*