

# Complex Punctuation

LO: To be able to use and understand complex punctuation correctly.

Brackets ( )

Dashes –

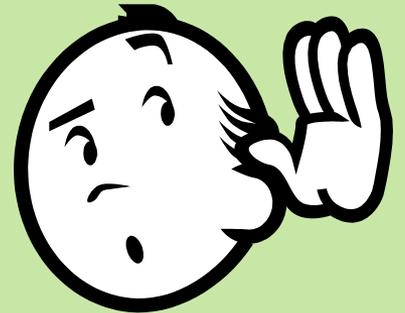
Ellipsis ...

Hyphen–

# Brackets and Dashes

- ▶ What are brackets?
- ▶ Brackets are used in pairs around a group of words that need to be kept separate in a sentence.

I listened carefully (he was speaking in a whisper) to try to hear his secret.



- ▶ The words in brackets add extra information to the sentence. This extra information can be:

### An interruption:

I knew he was cheating (I was not wrong) which is why I challenged him.

### An explanation:

The children (who were all in year six) were at school early for their visit to London.

### An afterthought:

I watched the car closely (which was going to fast in my opinion) to try and remember the number plate.

- ▶ What is a dash?
- ▶ A dash is a horizontal line that marks pauses within sentences. There are two ways dashes can be used:
  1. Double dashes, e.g. He was angry – and rightly so – because he had his wallet stolen.
  2. A single dash, e.g. I waited patiently – and it was almost too much to bear.

- ▶ Double dashes are used in a similar way to brackets as they separate groups of words from the rest of the sentence. This only occurs when the group of words comes in the middle of the sentence. They mark a less strong division than brackets.

The machinery – two JCB's, three cranes and two steamrollers – was brought to the building

- ▶ A single dash is used to mark an expectant pause in a sentence:

He looked into the darkness – two green eyes stared back.



- ▶ A single dash can also be used before a change of direction in a sentence:

The children all lined up outside – it was time for the spelling test.

▶ Try this: Add brackets or dashes to these sentences to make them more understandable for the reader.

1. The man was staring thoughtfully at the house I didn't know him.
2. Buckingham Palace where the Queen lives in London.
3. The new houses six bungalows and two blocks of flats were opened this morning.
4. The man crept through the door he came face to face with a bear!



▶ What is a Hyphen?

▶ A hyphen is only half the length of a dash. It is used between word to create a linking mark to make a new word or expression.

▶ For example:

water + wheel = water-wheel



red + hot = red-hot

twelve + year + old = twelve-year-old

- ▶ What is an Ellipsis?
- ▶ An ellipsis is a punctuation mark used in different ways to add meaning to sentences. It can be used in the following ways:
  - To build suspense – where you leave sentences unfinished to let the reader fill the gap.

They peered into the dark room and saw...

- ▶ To show interruptions – ellipsis are also used to show where one sentence has interrupted another, especially in speech.

“Do I have to....” Jane whined.

“Tidy your room? Yes you do!” snapped Mum.

“But...” Jane continued.

“No buts,” replied Mum in an exasperated voice, “just get on with it!”



\* Try this: add a hyphen and a word to make new words or phrases.

1. ice

2. twenty

3. mid

4. spot

\* Write two sentences with ellipsis, one with an ellipsis for suspense and one for interruption.