

No attempt will be made here to describe modern English usage in the matter of hyphens; its infinite variety defies description. . . . There is, however, one principle that seems to command at least lip service from all authorities. That is that the hyphen is not an ornament but an aid to being understood, and should be employed only when it is needed for that purpose.

H. W. Fowler,
*A Dictionary of
Modern English Usage*,
Second edition, revised by
Sir Ernest Gowers,
Oxford University Press, 1965, p. 255

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