



The Dash as Punctuation: Substitutions

The dash is longer than a hyphen. When typing a dash, use either two hyphens or the character called an em dash. The dash may be used to signal a substitution for parentheses or as a substitute for the phrases like “it is” or “they are.” When used as a substitute, the words after the dash become more important.

Example 1: There is someone we should elect president; it is Olivia!

With a dash as a substitution: There is someone we should elect president—Olivia!

Note that there are no spaces around the dash.

Example 2: I believe (and I say this in all honesty) you should be a writer.

I believe—and I say this in all honesty—you should be a writer.

Rewrite each sentence using dashes as substitutions.

1. Let's agree on the next steps; they are make a plan, divide the work, and complete the assignment.
2. The Beatles (the most famous rock band in history) were from England.
3. I know who is at the door; it is the mailman.
4. Mary, Queen of Scots (who was also a French queen) was cousin to Elizabeth I of England.
5. Tomorrow (my last day of school) is almost here.
6. She knew who she would pick on her team and they were Ralph, Juan and Lucy.