

Varied Fluency

Step 1 – Recognising Hyphens to Avoid Ambiguity

National Curriculum Objectives:

English Year 6: (6G5.13) [Using hyphens to avoid ambiguity](#)

English Year 6: (6G5.13) [How hyphens can be used to avoid ambiguity \[for example, *man eating shark* versus *man-eating shark*, or *recover* versus *re-cover*\]](#)

Terminology for pupils:

- (6G5.13) [hyphen](#)

Differentiation:

Developing Questions to support recognising hyphens to avoid ambiguity within two words and understanding how this changes their meaning (for example, *man eating shark* and *man-eating shark*).

Expected Questions to support recognising hyphens to avoid ambiguity within two words and within single words, and understanding how this changes the meaning (for example, *re-cover* and *recover*).

Greater Depth Questions to support recognising hyphens to avoid ambiguity, and comparing the use of hyphens and dashes to mark boundaries.

[More resources](#) from our Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling scheme of work.

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Recognising Hyphens to Avoid Ambiguity

1a. True or false? The sentence below has correctly used a hyphen to avoid ambiguity.

The decorator used special quick drying-paint on the front door.



VF

2a. Which option correctly completes the sentence below?

The _____ woman didn't care.

cold
hearted

cold-
hearted



VF

3a. Tick the sentence which has correctly used a hyphen.

The big-wheel is a fun looking fairground ride.

☐

Jane quickly side stepped the muddy-puddle.

☐

The medicine was very fast-acting.

☐

VF

4a. Combine two words from the word bank with a hyphen to match the following definition.

soft

feather

light

Almost weightless



VF

Recognising Hyphens to Avoid Ambiguity

1b. True or false? The sentence below has correctly used a hyphen to avoid ambiguity.

The play we went to watch had a well-known actor in the main part.



VF

2b. Which option correctly completes the sentence below?

The _____ girl was often in trouble.

hot-headed

hot headed



VF

3b. Tick the sentence which has correctly used a hyphen.

The library was full-of book loving people.

☐

The take-off went very smoothly.

☐

The fat-cat stole all of the cat food.

☐

VF

4b. Combine two words from the word bank with a hyphen to match the following definition.

gift

release

slow

Gradually distributed



VF

Recognising Hyphens to Avoid Ambiguity

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5a. True or false? The sentence below has correctly used a hyphen to avoid ambiguity.

After dropping all the plates on the floor, Roger had to re-serve the meal.



VF

5b. True or false? The sentence below has correctly used a hyphen to avoid ambiguity.

The answer that Janet gave to the teachers question was in-correct.



VF

6a. Which option correctly completes the sentence below?

Nina's drama training _____ her confidence.



restored

re-stored

VF

6b. Which option correctly completes the sentence below?

Jack was proud to _____ his school.



re-present

represent

VF

7a. Tick the sentence which has correctly used a hyphen.

The dog trainer found-Pip very cooperative.

☐

Betty was delighted to receive a re-ward for finding the purse.

☐

Barney has a part-time job delivering newspapers.

☐


VF

7b. Tick the sentence which has correctly used a hyphen.

When the clock wound down I had to re-turn the key.

☐

The circus had an incredible tight rope-walker.

☐

Karen returned to the library to re-new her book.

☐


VF

8a. Select the word from the word bank which matches the following definition.

resign

re-sign

To sign again



VF

8b. Select the word from the word bank which matches the following definition.

recover

re-cover

To get better



VF

Recognising Hyphens to Avoid Ambiguity

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9a. True or false? The sentence below has correctly used a hyphen to avoid ambiguity.

After getting cross and – rudely – putting the phone down, Nick knew we would have to re-call and apologise.



VF

9b. True or false? The sentence below has correctly used a hyphen to avoid ambiguity.

The young girls – finding the man's hat very funny – struggled to re-press their giggles.



VF

10a. Use both words to correctly complete the sentence below.

Philip – a successful business man – would have to _____ if he didn't _____ his contract.



resign

re-sign

VF

10b. Use both words to correctly complete the sentence below.

The pop group _____ – two years after splitting up – now the singer had _____ his ways.



re-formed

reformed

VF

11a. Tick the sentence which has correctly used a hyphen.

Sam – tired and cold though he was – agreed to re-try. ☐

Liz – a prize winning-engineer – decided to reinvent the machine. ☐

He was shy – very shy – and found he was completely tongue-tied. ☐



VF

11b. Tick the sentence which has correctly used a hyphen.

No one – absolutely no one – knew my deep-dark secret. ☐

I found my way to the waters-edge – eventually. ☐

The dentist – a very strict man – insisted on a sugar-free diet. ☐



VF

12a. Select the word from the word bank which completes the following sentence.

re-nowned

renowned

Barney Collins – a _____ author – came to school to talk about his new book.



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12b. Select the word from the word bank which completes the following sentence.

re-view

review

The film – which I thoroughly enjoyed – received a very critical _____.



VF

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Developing

- 1a. **False; quick-drying**
- 2a. **cold-hearted**
- 3a. **The medicine was very fast-acting.**
- 4a. **feather-light**

Expected

- 5a. **True**
- 6a. **restored**
- 7a. **Barney had a part-time job delivering newspapers.**
- 8a. **re-sign**

Greater Depth

- 9a. **True**
- 10a. **Philip – a successful business man – would have to resign if he didn't re-sign his contract.**
- 11a. **He was shy – very shy – and found he was completely tongue-tied.**
- 12a. **Barney Collins – a renowned author – came to school to talk about his new book.**

Varied Fluency
Recognising Hyphens to Avoid
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Developing

- 1b. **True**
- 2b. **hot-headed**
- 3b. **The take-off went very smoothly.**
- 4b. **slow-release**

Expected

- 5b. **False; incorrect doesn't use a hyphen.**
- 6b. **represent**
- 7b. **When the clock wound down I had to re-turn the key.**
- 8b. **recover**

Greater Depth

- 9b. **False; the word repress does not need a hyphen.**
- 10b. **The pop group re-formed – two years after splitting up – now the singer had reformed his ways.**
- 11b. **The dentist – a very strict man – insisted on a sugar-free diet.**
- 12b. **The film – which I thoroughly enjoyed – received a very critical review.**