Uni-edit English Writing Tip: How to use hyphens correctly (Part A)
征文(Uni-edit)英文写作秘诀：如何正确使用连字符（A 部分）

难度：高级

征文的编辑们在编修英文论文时，常常需要纠正连字符的用法。能够正确使用连字符表示作者的英文程度极佳，通过这种标点符号的使用，让写作的细节更加清楚易懂。
连字符是一条短横杠，能帮助读者清楚区别出文中哪一个是被修饰的字，常见于各种形式的英文学术写作中。

一般人写作时常会误用连字符，这可能是因为它在口语上并没有对应的符号，只有写作时才会用到。妥善使用连字符能让读者在阅读时更加流畅，避免语意不清的问题。

下面我们来看看一些常见的用法以及错误：

创造复合字

正确：the well-known actor　　　　(知名演员)
错误：the well known actor

在 这个例子中 well-known 是个复合字，用来形容 actor。在这边连字号表示 well 这个字只对 known 有效，而不会扩及 actor。也就是说，这个词的意思不是一个「健康 (well)而且为人所知(known)」的演员，而是「知名」(well-known)的演员。

正确：the out-of-date curriculum　　(过时的课程)
正确：short-term solution　　　　　　(暂时的解决方案)

让修饰的关系变清楚

正确：He is a small-business man.　　　(他是某家小型企业的老板)
错误：He is a small business man.　　　(他是个个子很小的生意人)

在以上的例子中，使用连字号可以让读者明了「小」的是企业的规模，而不是老板的个子。

正确：A light-green suitcase is pale in color.　　　(浅绿色的行李箱属于淡色系。)

这边描述的是行李箱的颜色。

正确：A light green suitcase is not heavy.　　　(轻的绿色行李箱重量不重。)

这边则是描述行李箱重量不重，且颜色是绿色。

Uni-edit English Writing Tip: How to use hyphens correctly (Part A)

Level of difficulty: Advanced

Editors at Uni-edit often need to correct the use of hyphens during English editing of manuscripts. Correct use of hyphens shows the author's advanced command of English and helps to make detailed descriptions clear.

The hyphen, which is a very short horizontal line that looks like this '-', is very helpful to disambiguate modified words, which will make your writing clearer. Hyphens are used often in all academic writing in English.

Hyphens cause writers more trouble than any other form of punctuation, except perhaps commas. This may be because the hyphen has no analogue in speech; it is punctuation created purely by the needs of print. The point of the hyphen is to avoid ambiguity for the reader.

Let's look at some common uses and misuses:

Create a compound word using a hyphen

Correct: the well-known actor
Incorrect: the well known actor

In this example, 'well-known' is a compound word that modifies 'actor'. The hyphen indicates that the 'well' applies to only the 'known' and does not apply to the 'actor'. That is, it is the actor is not both well and known.

Correct: the out-of-date curriculum
Correct: short-term solution

Make the modification clear using a hyphen

Correct: He is a small-businessman.
Incorrect: He is a small businessman.

Above, to indicate that it is the business that is small, and not the man who is small, we need the hyphen. Below is another example, where both situations are correct but have different meanings.

Correct: A light-green suitcase is pale in color.

Here the suitcase's color is described.

Correct: A light green suitcase is not heavy.

Here the suitcase is both light in weight and is green.

END OF TIP