

## HYPHENS

- **Hyphens connect word groups if they are used as adjectives.** Note the difference in examples below: the second sentence in each pair uses a hyphenated word group as an adjective.

*Asher's car is not up to date.*

*Asher needs to get an up-to-date car.*

*Jacob will be nine years old this year.*

*Mother brought her twelve-year-old son to the community pool.*

*Jacob's father smacked him with a wooden spoon that was three inches long.*

*Jacob's father smacked him with a three-inch wooden spoon.*

Some compound words—such as notebook and looking glass—do not require hyphens. When in doubt, check the dictionary!

**If an adverb ending in -ly precedes the noun, you do NOT use a hyphen.**

*Mother and Father are a happily married couple.*

- **Hyphens are used for two-word numbers from *twenty-one* through *ninety-nine* and between the numerator and the denominator of two-word fractions (*one-half*, *two-fifths*)**
- **Hyphens join prefixes *all-*, *ex-*, and *self-*, suffixes (*-elect*), and letters to a word.**  
*Ever since Asher got a job at the mechanic's shop, he has been self-supporting.*  
*Mother's ex-husband professed his all-encompassing hatred for Mother's new lover.*  
*The PTA president-elect made a strong impression on Mother.*  
*Jacob wore a neon-green T-shirt.*
- **Prefixes such as *anti-*, *non-*, *pro-*, and *co-* do not normally require a hyphen unless you want to prevent misreading (*co-op* is not the same as *coop*) or a double or triple letter (*anti-itch*, *bell-like*). When in doubt about whether to use a hyphen or not, consult the dictionary!**  
*Father always has to sit in the nonsmoking section of the restaurant.*  
*Asher got tired of Mother's antifamily behavior and told her to leave the house.*
- **Hyphens avoid ambiguity in certain words.**  
*Playing baseball with his friends is Jacob's favorite recreation.*  
*Mother's latkes were praised for their strong re-creation of authentic deli cuisine.*
- **Hyphenate the written form of fractions and of compound numbers from *twenty-one* to *ninety-nine*.**  
*Asher bequeathed one-third of his baseball cards to Jacob. He felt that the first twenty-five cards, though, would be his own choice.*

► Did you like the sample sentences? Get the whole story in Joshua Braff's *The Unthinkable Thoughts of Jacob Green*.