

Em Dash Lesson Plan

Suggested Lesson Procedure

1. Begin the lesson by distributing the guided notes worksheet to all students. Explain that they will be using this resource to follow along and record key information throughout the lesson.
2. Next, introduce the concept of the em dash using the provided PowerPoint presentation. Walk students through the slides, clearly explaining what an em dash is. Highlight the rules and model several examples, pausing to check for understanding as needed.
3. Once the notes are complete, transition into the practice activity. Begin with Part 1, where students will add em dashes to sentences where they correctly belong. This portion can be completed as a whole class to provide support and allow for discussion.
4. For Part 2, have students work independently to rewrite sentences so they correctly include em dashes. This allows students to apply their understanding more deeply.
5. After completion, you may choose to collect the work for grading or review the answers together as a class to reinforce understanding and address any misconceptions.

Side Notes for Teachers:

- When printing PDFs, select “actual size” or scale at 100% to ensure the resource prints as designed (avoid shrinking to fit).
 - This resource includes both editable Word documents and PDF versions for flexibility in instruction and customization.
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If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to me at chompingatthelit@gmail.com

Language Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.6.2 – Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.7.2 – Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.8.2 – Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.9-10.2 – Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.2 – Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

PREVIEW

NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

PUNCTUATION

PRACTICE

PREVIEW

NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

PREVIEW

NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

PREVIEW
NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

An **EM DASH (—)**
is a punctuation mark used
to create emphasis,
interruption, or extra
information in a sentence.

PREVIEW
NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

PREVIEW

NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

What an em dash is:

An em dash is this: —

THE AUTHOR—FAMOUS FOR HORROR STORIES—ALSO WROTE POETRY.

What an em dash is not:

It is not a hyphen: -

Hyphen (-) joins words together: **WELL-KNOWN AUTHOR**

It is not an en dash:

En dashes are used to show a range or a connection between two things, such as between numbers or dates

JOHN F. KENNEDY (1917–1963)

!!! Do not use spaces before or after an em dash !!!

PREVIEW

NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

PREVIEW
NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

REASONS TO USE AN EM DASH

- 1) **emphasis**: to draw attention to amplifying material
- 2) **extra information**: add details or clarify meaning
- 3) **interruption**: indicate interrupted speech or change of thought

PREVIEW
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PREVIEW
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PREVIEW

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It can be used in place of a colon or semicolon to link clauses, especially when the second part adds explanation or emphasis.

To create emphasis at the end of a sentence:

EXAMPLE: HE HAD ONE GOAL—TO WIN.

PREVIEW

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PREVIEW

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It can also replace commas or parentheses in the middle of a sentence.

To add extra information in a sentence or emphasize an idea:

EXAMPLES:

MY BROTHER—WHO NEVER LIKES SCARY MOVIES—WATCHED THE WHOLE FILM.

NEPTUNE—THE EIGHTH PLANET FROM THE SUN—IS VERY COLD.

NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

PREVIEW

NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

PREVIEW

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To show a strong break in thought:

EXAMPLE: I WAS READY TO LEAVE—BUT THEN THE PHONE RANG.

Use two em dashes to enclose an interrupting idea:

**EXAMPLE:
THE PUPPY—COVERED IN MUD FROM HEAD TO TAIL—JUMPED ONTO THE COUCH.**

PREVIEW

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PREVIEW
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To show an interruption in dialogue:

PREVIEW
EXAMPLE: "BUT I THOUGHT YOU SAID—"

PREVIEW
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NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

COMMA, DASH, OR PARENTHESES?

If all three are grammatically correct, the writer should choose based on style:

- Use **commas** for the most normal, neutral choice (casual).
- Use **parentheses** when the information feels like an aside (quiet).
- Use **em dashes** when you want emphasis or a dramatic pause (loud).

PREVIEW

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EM DASH *Guided Notes*

An em dash (—)

is a punctuation mark used to create emphasis, interruption, or extra information in a sentence

What an em dash is

An em dash is this: —

The author—famous for horror stories—also wrote poetry.

What an em dash is not

It is not an en dash

En dashes are used to show a range or a connection between two things, such as between numbers or dates

John F. Kennedy (1917–1963)

!!! Do not use spaces before or after an em dash !!!

REASONS TO USE AN EM DASH

1)

2)

3)

It can be used in place of a colon or semicolon to link clauses, especially when the second part adds explanation or emphasis.

To create emphasis at the end of a sentence

Example:

It can also replace commas or parentheses in the middle of a sentence.

To add extra information in a sentence or emphasize an idea

Examples:

To show a strong break in thought

Example:

Use two em dashes to enclose an interrupting idea

Example:

To show an interruption in dialogue or thought

Example:

Name:

Date:

EM DASH PRACTICE

Part 1: Add em dashes where they're needed. Every sentence needs at least one.

1. George Washington America's first president served two terms in office.
2. I was about to answer the question but the bell rang first.
3. The spring garden bright, colorful, and fragrant attracted dozens of butterflies.
4. My teacher who loves grammar spends her free time doing grammar puzzles.
5. "Wait you already finished the whole book?" she asked.
6. The puppy tiny but fearless barked at the much larger dog.
7. My little sister only five years old can already read simple chapter books.
8. He opened the door slowly and immediately regretted it.
9. The old fireplace warm and glowing was the dog's favorite place to sleep.
10. The students thought the test would be easy they were wrong.
11. *Wuthering Heights* written by Emily Brontë is her only novel.
12. Cheetahs the fastest land animals can reach speeds of up to 70 miles per hour.
13. Clay when heated in a kiln hardens into durable ceramic.
14. The fall of Rome didn't happen overnight it took centuries.
15. The microwave accidentally invented by Percy Spencer uses radiation to heat food quickly.
16. Microwaves unlike ovens heat food by exciting water molecules.
17. Bilbo Baggins an unlikely hero embarks on a dangerous adventure.
18. Hornets more aggressive than typical bees can sting multiple times.
19. A master's degree more specialized than a bachelor's degree often leads to higher earning potential.
20. Mushrooms aren't plants at all they're fungi.



Part 2: Rewrite each sentence using at least one em dash. Fix the punctuation by replacing commas, parentheses, colons, or semicolons with an em dash, or rewrite the sentence so it works correctly.

Example: He only wore one kind of shoes: sneakers. **Answer:** *He only wore one kind of shoes—sneakers.*

1. Jackie Robinson, the first African American to play in MLB, changed the sport forever.

PREVIEW

2. Plants, even small ones on a windowsill, can brighten a space.

NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

3. The room needed just one thing: candles.

PREVIEW

4. April (known for its unpredictable weather) often brings both sunshine and rain.

NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

5. Avocados (rich in healthy fats) have become extremely popular in recent years.

6. She wanted to go to the museum; I preferred staying home.

PREVIEW

7. Museums (filled with history, art, and culture) offer endless learning opportunities.

NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

8. I tried to call you you didn't answer.

PREVIEW

9. The movie started late; we missed the opening scene.

NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

10. Jane Austen (an English novelist) wrote *Pride and Prejudice*.

