

A Brief Analysis on Compound Word

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Abstract

The concept of compound word is from the rule of word-formation. Usually, there are three ways to form a compound word: closed form, hyphenated form, and open word. It is one thing to read it in a publish, but it is quiet another thing to use it correctly. Compound word, it was normally considered extraneous fluff and omitted. But, when we compose or check spellings during a test, we also easily get stuck, and feel confused that “should I put the two together” or “is there a hyphen between”. To aid English learners to get a clearer concept on compound word and master the usage of it, this paper aiming at analyzing rules such as “when to use”, “how to spell”, illustrate laws that should be followed strictly when forming or using a compound word.

Keywords

Compound word; Closed form; Open form; Hyphenated form.

1. Definition of Compound Word

We are quite familiar with the words such as pan, cake, pine, apple, mail, box, the meanings are easily guessed when these are formed into new words, pancake, pineapple, or mailbox. But someone is not so obvious to get, for example: insight, setback, cockpit, etc. All these words are compound words.

What is a compound word? It comes from Word Formation. Usually, there are two ways to form a word. One of them is compound, the other is derivation. [1] Compound word can be defined as joining these two independent words creates a compound word, which may have a new meaning or simply a more precise definition. These words can be formed either as a solid term or using a hyphen (-); non-standard phrases are often created as descriptive words or adjectives.

2. Classification of Compound Word

Usually, there are three forms of compound words. They are closed form, hyphenated form, and open word.

The first one is closed form. These are words completely joined together and are not separated by anything(e.g. software/ busboy/ undertake/).

The second is “Hyphenated form”. It is these words joined together by a hyphen. Here are some examples: over-consumption, off-the-grid, low-cost. Attention, this is a hyphen in the trans-Siberian. But, Life in designated area — the ghetto — was harsh. there are two dashes.

Open word is the last one. These are separated by space but mean as one when read. For example: style icon, cell phone, and registrar’s office.

3. Usage of Compound Word

A compound words is easy to understand, but sometimes you may have trouble in identifying them. Usually, the spelling quandary you have to deal include: how to identify a compound word?

when to use? Or, how to use it? Now, after rearranged the three points into a descending order of complexity, let's try to have a clearer insight into the compound word.

3.1. Open Form

The first is the open word. It is the one not so difficult to master. An open compound word is created in cases when the modifying adjective is used with its noun to create a new noun. This is not quite the same as a noun with a modifying adjective. We just use a space between the adjective and the noun, so sometimes it can be hard to identify as a compound; however, if the two words are commonly used together, it is considered to be a compound word. Here are some: study abroad/ press report/ square meter/ real estate.

Attention please, when adverbs ending in -ly combine with another word, the resulting compound is always spelled as two separate words. Such as overly concerned/ especially true/ largely irrelevant/ supply chain.

3.2. Closed Form

Closed form is a little bit more complex, but absolutely, not the most. Closed compound words look like one word. At one point, these words were not used together, but they are now accepted as a "real word" in the English language. Closed compound words are usually made up of only two words. For examples, software/ rooftop/ spaceship/ workshop. Here is a tip: The English language is always evolving, and when words become used more frequently, they are often eventually written as one word.

Take the internet for instance. When the Internet first got popular last century, people excited to talk about surfing the internet, or going on-line. Now that it is a daily routine for all of us, the spelling online has also become commonly accepted. Words, such as farmland/ foresee/ safeguard, are quite similar.

3.3. Hyphenated Form

Hyphenated Compound Words is not very easy, as we often get confused with should I plus a hyphen here, or not? There are a great many grammar rules regarding hyphens in compound words.

3.3.1. Used with Nouns

One important rule of thumb to remember is that: in most cases, a compound adjective is hyphenated if placed before the noun it modifies, but not if placed after the noun. [2]The sentence "This is a good solution for the long term", we can turn it into "This is a long-term solution". You should also use a hyphen with a compound modifier before a noun.

Most often, compound modifiers are made up of an adjective plus a noun or participle. They're also commonly composed of a noun plus a gerund, such as an energy-intensive solution / the man-made pollution/ an earth-shattering explosion. Do remember, a compound modifier only needs a hyphen when it comes before a noun. If it comes after the noun, leave the hyphen out: the pollution is made by man/ the solution is intensive energy.

3.3.2. Used with Adverbs

There is one other point: Don't use a hyphen when you have a compound modifier that consists of an adverb ending in -ly plus a participle or adjective. The -ly is sufficient to show that the compound is a unit of meaning. For example, some incredibly expensive solutions/ an impossibly long name/ an immensely popular device.

When you have a compound modifier that is interrupted by some other word that's not really part of the modifier, use a suspended hyphen: Take a ten-minute break.

3.3.3. Mean as a Unit

A compound modifier (or a phrasal adjective) is made up of two or more words that must be understood as a unit. For example, a large expensive solution does not contain a compound modifier. Because large and expensive do not form a unit of meaning in it. But an energy-intensive solution does contain a compound modifier. The hyphen means that the words should be taken together as a descriptor for the noun.

3.3.4. Used to Divide Words

Moreover, hyphens are also commonly used to divide words that fall at the end of a line of text and continue on the next line. Book and newspaper publishers still set type this way[3], but it is rarely necessary to manually insert word breaks in your own writing because modern word processors automatically justify and align your text. If you do need to split a word at the end of a line, it is best to break the word between syllables.

4. Conclusion

The aboves are just some of many rules concerning hyphens in compound words and it is often necessary to consult the dictionary to determine whether these terms should be spelled with a space between, hyphenated, or not.

However, compound words are rather active in English. Obtaining the rules of English compound word, and getting familiar with it, it will definitely improve your written composing ability.

References

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