

```
\discretionary { <pre-break text> } { <post-break text> } { <no-break text>
}
```

This command specifies a “discretionary break”, namely, a place where T<sub>E</sub>X can break a line. It also tells T<sub>E</sub>X what text to put on either side of the break.

- If T<sub>E</sub>X does not break there, it uses the *<no-break text>*.
- If T<sub>E</sub>X does break there, it puts the *<pre-break text>* just before the break and the *<post-break text>* just after the break.

Just as with \-, T<sub>E</sub>X isn’t obligated to break a line at a discretionary break. In fact, \- is ordinarily equivalent to `\discretionary{-}{-}{-}`.

T<sub>E</sub>X sometimes inserts discretionary breaks on its own. For example, it inserts `\discretionary{}{}{-}` after an explicit hyphen or dash.

*Example:*

```
% An ordinary discretionary hyphen (equivalent to \-):
\discretionary{-}{-}{-}
% A place where TeX can break a line, but should not
% insert a space if the line isn’t broken there, e.g.,
% after a dash:
\discretionary{}{}{-}
% Accounts for German usage: ‘flicken’, but ‘flik-
% ken’:
German ‘‘fli\discretionary{k-}{k}{ck}en’’
```