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The \- command inserts a “discretionary hyphen” into a word. The discretionary hyphen allows T<sub>E</sub>X to hyphenate the word at that place. T<sub>E</sub>X isn’t obliged to hyphenate there—it does so only if it needs to. This command is useful when a word that occurs in one or two places in your document needs to be hyphenated, but T<sub>E</sub>X can’t find an appropriate hyphenation point on its own.

*Example:*

Alice was exceedingly reluctant to shake hands first  
with either Twee\-\dle\-\dum or Twee\-\dle\-\dee, for  
fear of hurting the other one’s feelings.

*produces:*

Alice was exceedingly reluctant to shake hands first with either Twee-  
dledum or Tweedledee, for fear of hurting the other one’s feelings.