1. Focus

Explain Ellipses and Em Dashes

Display the following sentences on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources.

Sentence 1: Ditanu had been living in a home . . . of sorts.
Sentence 2: Ditanu was overjoyed to start working as an apprentice—and Lamusa was happy to no longer have to feed the boy.

Example Text

Say: An ellipsis is a row of three periods after a word. It is used to show that a piece of text is missing from a sentence or a quote. It can also be used to allow for a pause in writing. In sentence 1, the ellipsis is used to force a pause as the reader reads the sentence. An em dash is used to replace commas or semicolons. Writers use em dashes to add emphasis to a statement, show an interruption, or show an abrupt change in thought. In sentence 2, the em dash is used to emphasize how Ditanu’s working as an apprentice made both Ditanu and Lamusa happy.

Model Using Ellipses and Em Dashes

Display the modeling text on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources, and read it aloud to students.

1. No one had dared tell the widow that she should stay at home . . . and they weren’t going to now.
2. Belshunu had seen something in the boy—the same way he was able to see the beauty in granite.
3. Before he could thank her, Ditanu heard a voice from the courtyard—a familiar one—that sent a shiver up his spine.

Modeling Text

Read sentence 1. Say: The ellipsis in sentence 1 tells me that the writer wants me to pause slightly after reading the first part of the sentence.

Read sentence 2. Say: In this sentence, the em dash tells me that the writer is adding a phrase to support the idea that Belshunu had a way of sensing qualities in people and in the stone he worked with. The em dash replaces a comma. It helps the reader know what follows is important text.
Read sentence 3. **Say:** In the third sentence, the words a familiar one are separated by em dashes. These em dashes provide extra information in the sentence and take the place of commas.

2. **Rehearse**

**Practice Using Ellipses**

Display the practice text on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources.

1. Ditanu had a job of sorts.
2. He hadn’t thought about how difficult it might be to be a widow. Even a rich one. But now he considered it.

**Practice Text**

Ask students to decide whether ellipses or em dashes should be used in the sentences. (Students do not need to copy the sentences.)

If your class includes English language learners or other students who need support, use “Strategies to Support ELs.”

**Share Sentences with Ellipses and Em Dashes**

Invite volunteers to come to the chart and revise the sentences using either ellipses or em dashes. Ask students the following questions:

- Which sentence needs an ellipsis? Why?
- Which sentence needs an em dash? Why?

3. **Independent Writing and Conferring**

**Say:** We learned that an ellipsis is used to show that something is missing or that there is a pause. An em dash can be used in place of commas or semicolons and is often used to add emphasis or show interruption. Think about how you could use ellipses and em dashes to add interest and flair to your writing.

If you would like to give students additional practice using ellipses and em dashes, have them complete BLM 11.

4. **Share**

Bring students together. Invite volunteers to share their answers to BLM 11. Provide feedback as necessary. Ask students to review what they learned about ellipses and em dashes.

**Strategies to Support ELs**

**Beginning**

Beginning ELs are not ready to work on this English conventions skill. While other students collaborate on the practice activity or write independently, meet one on one with students and continue to support developmentally appropriate language, grammar, and conventions based on students’ language levels.

**Intermediate and Advanced**

Pair students with fluent English speakers to complete the practice activity. Provide the following sentence frames to assist students in identifying when to use ellipses and em dashes:

*This ellipsis shows ______.*

*This em dash shows ______.*

Pair students with fluent English speakers to complete BLM 11.