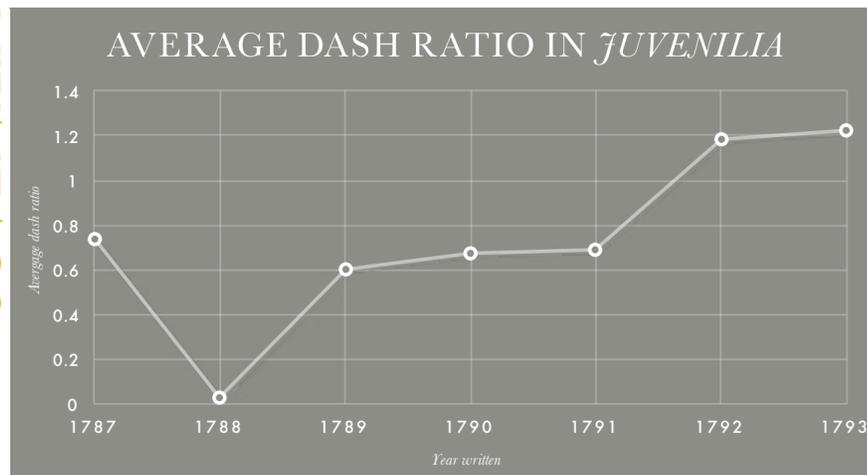


JANE AUSTEN.

Through my research, I have confirmed that Austen increased her use of dashes as she aged and have also possibly discovered a mis-dating of two of Austen's *Juvenilia* short stories. The dashes counted for this research did not include hyphens or dashes used in place of a proper noun.

This poster and its graphs reflect Austen's dash usage in her fiction writing and does not include her letters or note-taking. Austen's nonfiction dashes are briefly mentioned in the "what did dashes look like in her casual writing" sidebar on the very right.

JUVENILIA



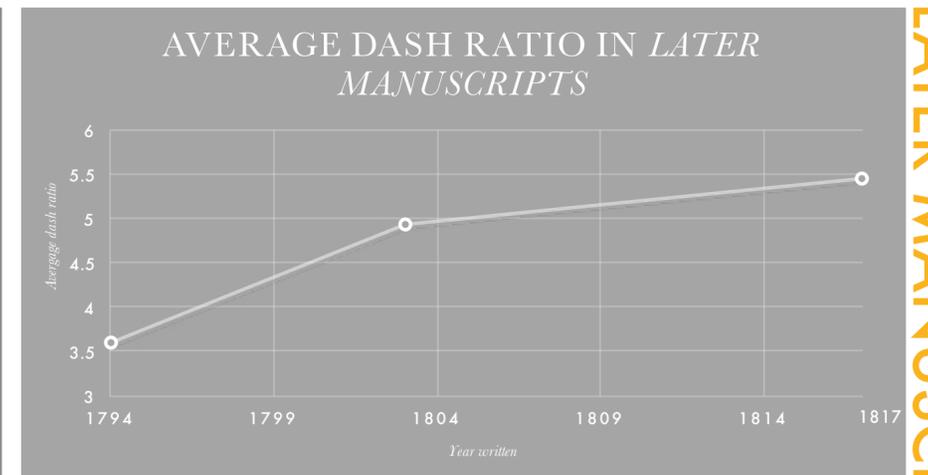
In 1788, Austen used just one dash out of five works totaling 3,635 words. It's estimated the two stories "Edgar and Emma" (ratio: 0.93) and "Amelia Webster" (ratio: 1.15) were written in the previous year, 1787, but in comparison to every other work in *Juvenilia*, it seems they should be dated closer to >1790. The only ratios closest to those is the ratio of 1.13 in "Catherine, or the Bower" of 1792. It is unlikely to me that Austen would use such a high ratio of dashes in two out of three of her estimated writings of 1787 and then not do similar the following year.

An editor named William Gifford often advised and edited texts for publisher John Murray, who published three of Austen's novels. Gifford was clearly displeased with Austen's grammar and punctuation, which he expressed in letters to Murray regarding *Pride and Prejudice*: "I have lately read it again – tis very good – wretchedly printed in some places, & so pointed as to be unintelligible."

WHAT DID HER EDITORS THINK?

39% increase of dash usage from the lowest point on the graph (.03, or the singular dash used in 1788) to her last year writing *Juvenilia*, 1793.

After *Juvenilia*, Austen's use of dashes in her fiction writing significantly increased. Note how the *Juvenilia* graph has an average dash ratio range between 0.0-1.4, whereas *Later Manuscripts* has an average dash ratio range of 3.0-6.0. This graph includes her three unpublished works, *Lady Susan* (3.61), *The Watsons* (4.94), and *Sanditon* (5.45) respectively. This proves Austen used more dashes as she aged. In comparison to her published and edited works of similar years, *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) features 394 dashes out of 120,697 words, a ratio of 0.33—much less than the projected ratio of >5.0 the graph shows.



2,975 dashes total in Austen's three fiction works in *Later Manuscripts*, out of a total of 64,081 combined words. That's **2,322** more dashes than the 653 dashes of the 70,051 words in *Juvenilia*.

LATER MANUSCRIPTS

WHAT DID DASHES LOOK LIKE IN HER CASUAL WRITING?

Austen's casual writing features even more dashes than her fiction works. For example, in letters to her niece (1814), Austen used a ratio of 6.45 dashes. Dashes also increase in her note-taking over the years. In her notes of *Opinions of Mansfield Park* (1814) she has a ratio of 6.88 dashes, whereas three years later, *Opinions of Emma*, has a ratio of 8.55 dashes.



What do scholars think?

When discussing Austen, Professor Kathryn Sutherland of the English language and literature faculty at Oxford University answers the question if editors should revise seemingly poorly used punctuation well: "In taking them away, it becomes more grammatical and sophisticated – but something has been lost."

What are these numbers? In order to compare the dashes Austen used in pieces of all word counts, to get the dash ratios, I divided the amount of dashes by the word count and then multiplied by 100 to give an easily comparable number. Some of the word counts in *Juvenilia* are estimated because there wasn't an online source to get the exact number. Using the word count from the pieces I knew, I discovered the average word count of a page in *Juvenilia* has 312 words, and I then used that number to multiply by the page counts of the works not available online.

dashes—

in Austen's work and what they imply.