Semicolons



The semicolon is used to connect two closely related ideas. Semicolons provide a stronger connection between ideas than periods and commas. There are three main ways a semicolon is used.

Connecting two complete sentences

Semicolons can connect two complete sentences that are closely related.

Examples:

- I went to the campus bookstore; the security guard told me it had just closed.
- My roommate went to the market for me; he forgot to get the milk.

Conjunctive adverbs

Semicolons can be used with a conjunctive adverb to explain the relationship between two complete sentences that are closely related. (Conjunctive adverbs include: however, therefore, in addition, moreover, subsequently, consequently, instead, and additionally)

Examples:

- There was black mold found in the press box of Husky Stadium; consequently, university contractors are trying to eliminate the health and safety risk.
- The Psychology professor wants to create a comprehensive analysis of the study habits of residence students; therefore, she will create and distribute an optional survey to every student living on campus.

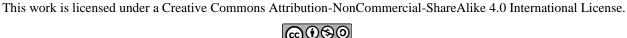
Lists with additional punctuation

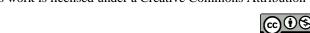
Semicolons can be used instead of a comma in a sentence where other types of punctuation are already being used. This is useful to differentiate items in a list.

Example:

- In the garage, there are eight 4-cylinder engines, all working; three 6-cylinder engines, of which only two work; and two 8-cylinder engines, none of which work.
- The society's executive council is composed of James Gowanlock, President; Courtney Purcell, Vice President; Adam Fournier, Secretary; William Novak, Treasurer; and Mariah Connor, Events Coordinator.

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Practice: Semicolons

Correct the punctuation and insert semicolons where they are needed.

- 1. Matthew wants to find out whether students prefer Tim Horton's or Just Us!. Therefore, he is gathering data to find out.
- 2. On eBay you can buy *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, first edition, *Jane Eyre*, second edition, and *Frankenstein*, third edition.
- 3. The beach is a perfect place to watch the sunset you can see the sun sink into the waves.
- 4. To make for a better experience in the cafeteria the school is allowing students to vote for what food they want in addition they are expanding their gluten free menu.
- 5. I forgot my umbrella this morning. When I got to school I was soaked.
- 6. In this essay you were supposed to answer the questions "What the main plot?", "What characters were involved?", and "What narrative devices are used in the work?"
- 7. I would enjoy going to the beach, however, I already have plans for this weekend.
- 8. We checked the price of flying to Montreal, the train is much cheaper.
- 9. This film has few redeeming qualities, in short, watching it was a waste of my time and money.
- 10. This gentleman starts school in September, he will be five years old by then.

Answers:

- 1. Matthew wants to find out whether students prefer Tim Horton's or Just Us!: therefore, he is gathering data to find out.
- 2. On eBay you can buy *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, first edition: *Jane Eyre*, second edition: and *Frankenstein*, third edition.
- 3. The beach is a perfect place to watch the sunset; you can see the sun sink into the waves.
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- 10. This gentleman starts school in September; he will be five years old by then.

