

THE SEMICOLON

The semicolon can be a very confusing mark of punctuation. It's often incorrectly used, and many will avoid it altogether because they're unsure of how to use it properly.

The semicolon has also been the subject of controversy. Many consider its correct use to be the mark of a well-educated individual, while others consider it a sign of snobbery. It's rarely ever absolutely necessary, and if we threw the semicolon out of the grammar books altogether, we could still form sentences and have proper grammar.

But that's essentially what makes it so special. It's a wonderful little tool that, when used correctly, can enhance our writing and the way our audience understands it.

It's actually very simple:

FULL SENTENCE (IC); FULL SENTENCE (IC)

The semicolon is used when indicating a *close relationship* between two complete sentences (independent clauses). A period could be used, but the writer does not want the connection to be broken abruptly by the use of a full stop.

	oth what precedes and what follows a semicolon must be complete sentences that an stand alone.
	ne semicolon binds those independent clauses more closely than they would be if eparated by a period.
□Th	ne semicolon often replaces a conjunction such as and or but.

Examples:

- I like to go to the CNE in September; I wait all year to eat a deep-fried Mars bar.
- Abdul goes to the emergency room all the time; the healthcare workers know them by name.
- I'm too tired; I can't stay awake any longer.
- Ibrahim drives a Tesla; Amina drives a Civic.



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Conjunctive Adverbs

You can also use a semicolon when you join two independent clauses together with a conjunctive adverb, e.g. however, moreover, therefore, consequently, otherwise, nevertheless, thus.

Examples:

- I don't like onions; however, I don't taste them in this soup.
- Because Bibi was sick, they missed a lot of classes; consequently, they failed the course.
- Arman was afraid that they might use a semicolon incorrectly; therefore, they avoided using them altogether.

Remember: semicolons may *not* be used with a **coordinating conjunction**, which must be preceded by a **comma** when joining two sentences. Coordinating conjunctions include: for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so. (FANBOYS)

Semicolons in Lists

The semicolon is also less frequently used as a divisor to make meaning clear in a sentence where commas are being used for other purposes. A common example of this use is to separate the items of a list when some of the items themselves contain internal commas.

A: Since I've been living in Canda, I've visited Hamilton, Niagara Falls, Algonquin Park, north of Toronto in cottage country, Montreal, Quebec, and Quebec City.

How many places have I been?

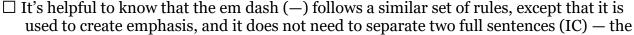
We are lost in a sea of commas! In this case, we will use the semicolon to separate the items in the list. The semicolon will clean the commas up, bring order to the sentence, and make things clear.

B: Since I've been living in Canda, I've visited Hamilton; Niagara Falls; Algonquin Park, north of Toronto in cottage country; Montreal, Quebec; and Quebec City.

Now how many places have I been?

Extra Notes

⊔ Be careful not to u	ise semicolo	ons excessively	. They can be	ecome addictive	e for some writers
and, if overused,	they lose th	eir flair.	·		
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em dash should also be used sparingly!

