

LO: To be able to use the semi-colon correctly.

Semi-Colons



The most feared punctuation on Earth!



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A semi-colon is a pause in a sentence.

It is stronger than a comma but weaker than a full stop.



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Rule 1: The semi-colon can be used instead of a full stop.

It can link two complete sentences and join them to make one sentence. The semi-colon can be used instead of a connective to join the sentences.

Example 1: The door swung open; a masked figure strode in.

Example 2: Alex bought a toy car; he played with it as soon as he got home.

Example 3: She was very tired; she had worked late the night before.

So long as the second 'sentence' after the semi-colon links back to the first 'sentence,' it is correct.

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Where could you add a semi-colon to these sentences?

The rabbit had been sadly neglected it was in an awful state.

John opened the drawer it was empty.

The wedding invitations have all been sent out two hundred guests are expected.

Tom was very clever and worked hard he deserved to pass all his SATs.

Sally's birthday is in November John's is in September.

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Rule 2: The semi-colon can be used in a descriptive list.

Usually we use commas in a list however, when we describe each item in the list, the sentence is much longer meaning that a semi-colon is more appropriate.

(Before) At the circus we saw a clown, a lion, a fire eater and an eight year old acrobat.

(After) At the circus we saw a clown juggling with swords and daggers; a lion who stood on a ball; a fire eater with flashing eyes; and an eight year old acrobat.

Make this sentence more detailed and replace the commas with semi-colons.

In London we saw a bus, a boat, a bridge and the Shard.

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Rule 3: Semi-colons are to be used sparingly.

Just use them once or twice in a piece of writing when you want to show off!

