

Don't Be Afraid Of...

Semicolons & Colons



What's the Point of a Semicolon?

- The most common way to use a semicolon is to connect two independent clauses that are related in some way.
- The ice cream truck man drove by my house today. He had big hairy knuckles.
- Replace the period with a semicolon and you create a more fluid sentence.



“ Using a semicolon isn't hard; I once saw a party gorilla do it. ”

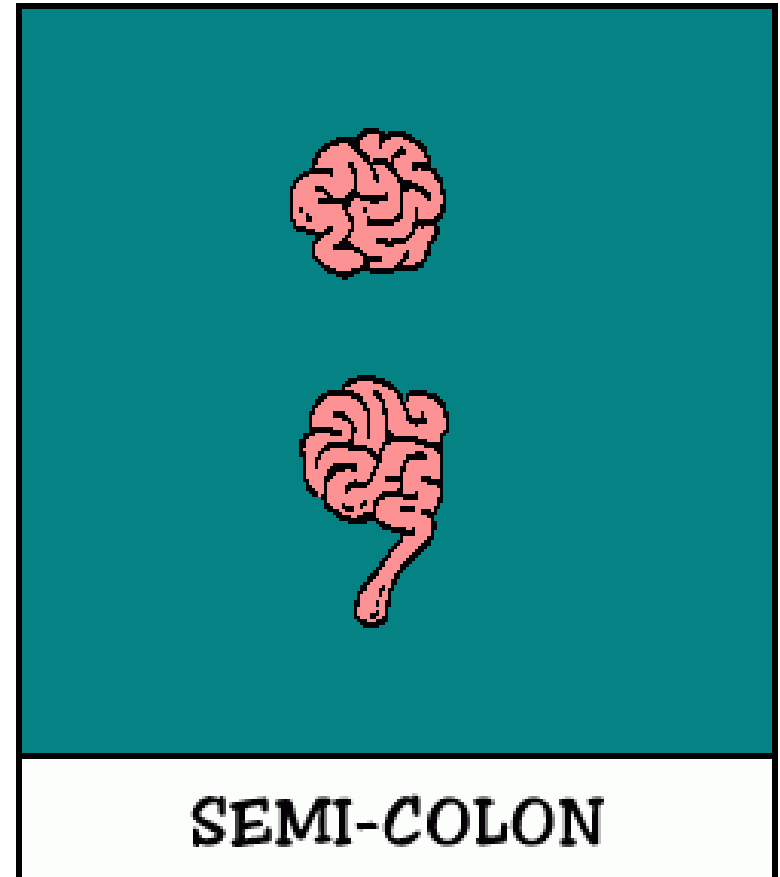
How do I use a semicolon?



- If you have two independent clauses (they can stand alone as their own sentences), it's okay to use a semicolon.
- My aunt also had hairy knuckles; she loves to wash and comb them.

What Not To Do with a Semicolon

- Don't use it with conjunctions (*and, but, or, nor, for, so, and yet*).
- My aunt's hairy knuckles are magnificent indeed, **but** I have no desire to have hairy knuckles.





Any other Semicolon Uses?

- Use a semicolon to function as a “super-comma.” If you have a list of items that include commas or detailed descriptions, the semicolon is a great replacement for the comma.
- While searching for a good place to plant roots, I have lived in Whittier, California; Seattle, Washington; Denver, Colorado; and Portland, Maine.

What About the Colon?

- *Punctuate it Right* calls the **colon** the mark of expectation or addition because it signals that what comes next is directly related to the previous sentence.



Introducing the colon



Colons & Complete Sentences

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Only use a colon after a statement that is a complete sentence (***not*** with fragments).

CORRECT: The teacher has two favorite hobbies: snowboarding down mountains and baking delicious treats.

INCORRECT: The teacher's two favorite hobbies are: snowboarding down mountains and baking delicious treats.

"And always remember that it is the gritty colon itself, not the half-baked semi-colon, that wields the power to confound even the most erudite minds."



Colons & Lists

- A colon is a handy way to introduce a list of items, as long as you remember the cardinal rule of colons: what comes before the colon must be a complete sentence.
- Before going outside in the snow, I must remember to bundle up with winter gear: a down jacket, a colorful beanie, a pair of cozy gloves, long wool socks, and some waterproof boots.



Colons & Quotes

- Colons are also a wonderful way to introduce a quote, as long as you remember the cardinal rule of colons: what comes before the colon must be a complete sentence.
- Woody Allen's perspective on a positive attitude is worth remembering: "I am thankful for laughter, except when milk comes out of my nose."
- You are left with only one option: Press on until you have mastered it.

So have no fear! Use one today!

THE SEMICOLON & THE COLON





Works Cited

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