

WRITING CENTER

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Semicolon Use

Semicolons are generally used as follows:

1. To join together two independent clauses that are related to one another.

\*Independent clauses are complete sentences.\*

(ex.) The grocery store was crowded; it’s always busy on Sundays.

(ex.) She couldn’t believe what she was seeing; the cat was on the roof!

1. Between two independent clauses that are connected by a conjunctive adverb or transitional phrase.

\*Conjunctive adverbs are words/phrases such as however, therefore, as a result, similarly, nonetheless, etc. Typically, these phrases are preceded by a semicolon and followed by a comma.\*

(ex.) I didn’t really want to go to the party; however, I went anyway.

(ex.) Susan did the laundry; meanwhile, Jack started cooking dinner.

1. To separate items in a list that contains commas.

(ex.) I bought milk, cheese, and eggs from the grocery store; onions, potatoes, and corn from the farmer’s market; and flowers from the nursery.

(ex.) Sam studies math, English, and science on Tuesdays; and he studies Spanish, history, and music on Wednesdays.

Still unsure about when to use a semicolon?

Make an appointment with the Writing Center!

Library, Room 311/312

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