

Semicolons A

Use a semicolon between independent clauses that are closely related in thought and that are not joined by a coordinating conjunction (*and, but, for, nor, or, so, or yet*).

EXAMPLE I was happy about the trip; Nepal had always appealed to me.

Use a semicolon between independent clauses joined by a conjunctive adverb or a transitional expression.

CONJUNCTIVE ADVERB I was tired; therefore, I stopped to rest.

TRANSITIONAL EXPRESSION Pang is a great runner; in fact, he's unbeatable.

EXERCISE Insert semicolons where they are needed in the following sentences.

Example 1. The elevator is full; would you like to use the stairs?

1. One side was willing to negotiate however, the other side refused.
2. Ms. Kyung is a fantastic teacher that is, she's my favorite.
3. Adjust the dial carefully the mechanism is sensitive.
4. Guadalupe ran toward home plate her run tied the game.
5. I was disappointed in the play in other words, it was terrible.
6. The novel is set in my hometown indeed, I recognized several places.
7. That shrub has a strong scent it smells like grape drink.
8. Kelly wanted a better job as a result, she started polishing her résumé.
9. We were all bored to tears nevertheless, we kept working.
10. The fax machine beeped the computers buzzed the phones jangled.
11. My grandfather was a code talker during WWII in fact, he got a medal for his work.
12. Turn up the television the news is on.
13. The film broke the audience groaned in disappointment.
14. The play's cast was frightened even so, they put on a good performance.
15. Bring us our check, please we'd like to go.
16. The dog lay down in the sun for a nap the cat joined him soon after.
17. Carl bumped the glass with his elbow the glass hit the floor milk sprayed in all directions.
18. Today is Mara's birthday therefore, she gets to pick the video.
19. I read the book I was not impressed.
20. Please set the table it is time to eat.

Semicolons B

A semicolon (rather than a comma) may be needed before a coordinating conjunction to join independent clauses that contain commas.

EXAMPLE The painting, which had once adorned the vestibule, lay in the attic for decades; and when it was rediscovered, the church promptly sold it.

Use a semicolon between items in a series if the items contain commas.

EXAMPLE The ushers will be Anthony Morales, brother of the groom; George Rosada, cousin of the bride; and Hershel Webber, friend of the groom.

EXERCISE Insert semicolons where they are needed in the following sentences. Some commas should

be changed to semicolons.

Example 1. The present, a concertina, was for my sister, Irene, but Igor, who isn't good at keeping secrets, told her what it was half an hour before the party.

1. I lent him *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, by Mark Twain, *Call of the Wild*, by Jack London, and *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, by Zora Neale Hurston.

2. The hailstones, which were the size of marbles, fell for at least five minutes, but still, despite the chance of damage to the floats, they did not cancel the parade.

3. Mr. Magruder, the engineer, Ms. Lipscombe, the sheriff, Mr. Jones, the pastor, and Ms. Blank, the secretary, were all suspects.

4. The frog, whose name is Steve, likes to swim, dive, and float but, as you know, he also frequently hides inside the small, plastic castle.

5. I have blue, green, and black socks but I don't have any maroon, gold, or rust ones.

6. Aunt Bea, who loves photography, has pictures of deer, antelope, and other wild beasts but she has never photographed a lion, tiger, or bear.

7. Virginia, who wants to be a doctor, has been studying hard, but, in my opinion, Mark, her brother, studies even harder.

8. I have visited Paris, Texas, Paris, Idaho, Paris, Kentucky, and Paris, Illinois.

9. Cyrus mowed the grass, raked the leaves, fertilized the flower beds, and watered the plants and he also made chicken soup for Maddie, who had been feeling ill.

10. I felt immense relief when I finished the exercise, which had taken hours to complete, but much to my dismay, there was yet more to be done.