



Why do we care?

There are three main reasons to use the semicolon, all of which can strengthen the clarity of your writing.

Information retrieved from:

Sousa, Morgan and Dana Lynn Driscoll. "Brief Overview of Punctuation." *Purdue Online Writing Lab*, 4 April 2014, <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/566/01/>

Writing Desk Hours

Monday-Thursday

12-5pm, 7-10pm

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Rolvaag 302 & 354

The answers to these practice examples are located at the Rolvaag Writing Desk!

Have more questions? Still don't understand semicolons? Make an appointment with a writing tutor!

- 1.) Visit the Writing Desk homepage, or stolaf.edu/asc/writing-help/
- 2.) Click on the Appointments box
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Or just drop on by!

Pamphlet created by Naomi Chalk '18

Semicolons

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1. Use a semicolon to link two independent clauses (i.e. a sentence with a subject and a verb) without using connecting words such as “and” or “or.”

Example: The Pause makes delicious pizza; I love ordering it on weekends.

These two sentences can both exist on their own and be correct. Use a semicolon specifically when the second clause restates the first or when the two clauses are of equal importance.



3. The third way semicolons are used is to join elements of a series when individual items of the series already include commas.

Example: Last year when I traveled to Australia over interim, my favorite places were Sydney, New South Wales; Cairns, Queensland; and Brisbane, Queensland.

Semicolons are used in three different ways

2. You can also use a semicolon to join two independent clauses with a conjunctive adverb (adverbs that join independent clauses). These adverbs include: however, therefore, consequently, moreover, otherwise, thus, etc.

Example: I would love to get a caramel apple cider from the Cage every day after class; however, my Flex dollars would run out too fast!

Semicolons may be used to join two independent clauses when the second clause begins with a transition, including: for example, in fact, that is, for instance, in addition, on the other hand, etc.

Try correcting these sentences so they use the semicolon correctly:

After watching a late night show on the Pause Mane Stage; I typically grab a slice of pizza on the way out.

The vegan cookie is my favorite treat from the Cage, in addition, I love the Italian sodas!

When my friend studied abroad on the Theatre in London program, he got to visit Amsterdam, the Netherlands, Paris, France, and Dublin, Ireland in addition to London, England!

Now try making your own sentences using these rules!

