

ACT MINI-LESSON: SEMICOLONS & COLONS

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SEMICOLON USAGE

THERE ARE ONLY TWO CORRECT WAYS TO USE A SEMICOLON!

- -The semicolon (;) is a STRONG mark of punctuation
- -When you see a semicolon, it calls for a **STRONG** pause (think hybrid between a period and a comma)

RULE #1

- Use a semicolon between two independent clauses when the second one has a strong connection to the first one, and they are equally important.
- Choose a semicolon over a period or over a comma and a conjunction when you want to emphasize to your reader the connection between the two independent clauses.
- -The pattern looks like this:
 - COMPLETE SENTENCE + ; + COMPLETE SENTENCE
 - COMPLETE SENTENCE +; CONJ ADVERB+ , + COMPLETE SENTENCE
- -Example: Grandma still rides her Harley motorcycle; her pet poodle balances in a basket between the handlebars.

LIST OF CONJUNCTIVE ADVERBS

accordingly
also
besides
consequently
conversely
finally
furthermore
hence

however
indeed
instead
likewise
meanwhile
moreover
nevertheless
next

nonetheless
otherwise
similarly
still
subsequently
then
therefore
thus

RULE #2

- Rule #2: Use a semicolon to separate complex items in a series. That is, when items already have commas in them, use semicolons to separate the items:
- → The pattern looks like this:
 - Item 1, with internal punctuation ; item 2, with internal
 - punctuation ; and item 3, with internal punctuation.
- -Example: Last year, Dolly went to Honolulu, Hawaii; Mallorca, Spain; Puerto Vallarta, Mexico; Florence, Italy; and Tacoma, Washington.

PRACTICE! ADD SEMICOLONS WHERE THEY BELONG IN THE FOLLOWING SENTENCES:

- Directions: Add semicolons where they belong in the following sentences.
- 1. We knew that it was early we decided to head out anyway.
- 2. Several faculty members attended the meeting, including Sandy Johanson, Professor of Philosophy Jennifer Hoene, Professor of English Frank Wilson, Professor of Mathematics and Gary Oliviera, Professor of Art.
- 3. I love scary movies watching them late at night is the best.
- 4. My sister knew it was a lost cause she decided to let her son go to the movies.
- 5. The realization was a strong one she had it while she was dreaming.

SEMICOLON REVIEW

- Write down the two ways to use semicolons properly. Include an example to illustrate each.



COLONS

- Looks like :
- Usually signals that additional information is to follow

COLONS

- **RULE #1: Use a colon after an independent clause to illustrate, clarify, enumerate, or amplify**
- Example
- We finally discovered the truth about Boo Radley: he was shy but not a threat.

- **Rule #2: Use a colon when an independent clause is followed by a list ONLY when the list is not preceded by a *verb or preposition* (time/place)**

CORRECT

We went to the following places: New York City, Albany, Scranton, and Providence.

INCORRECT

The sauce is made of: tomatoes, onions, oregano, and garlic.



- **Rule #4: Use a colon to separate titles and subtitles in a book**
- Example

In class, we read a passage from Julia Casterton's book *Creative Writing: A Practical Guide*.

- **Rule #5: Use a colon after a salutation in a business letter.**
- Examples
 - Dear Mr. Jones:
 - Dear Ms. Sroka:

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT! SEMICOLON OR COLON??

1. You asked for forgiveness he granted it to you.
2. The American flag has three colors red white and blue.
3. Oscar took great care with his work therefore he was very successful.
4. Several countries were hurt by the recent hurricane Westchester, Suffolk, Putnam, and Lenox.
5. You car is new mine is eight years old.

