

Topic: Semicolon

Examples

- Use a semicolon to replace a period between two closely related complete sentences.
 - I am excited to go to the amusement park; I cannot wait to ride the big rollercoaster.

 - Use a semicolon to separate items in a list when at least one of the items has a comma within it.
 - John's band traveled to New York, Boston, and Hartford in the Northeast; Chicago, Columbus and Cleveland in the Midwest; and Orlando and Charleston in the South.
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Topic: Colon

Examples

- Use a colon after a complete sentence to set off a list.
 - When you go to the store, please pick up the following items: soap, gum, and batteries.

 - Use a colon after a complete sentence to set off a clarification.
 - We were shocked to learn who the villain in the film was: the seemingly friendly shopkeeper.
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Topic: Apostrophe

- Use an apostrophe before the "s" to indicate that a singular entity possesses something.
 - The toy's instructions were rather confusing.

- Use an apostrophe after the "s" to indicate that a plural entity possesses something.
 - All the players' equipment must conform to the rules.

- Use an apostrophe to indicate a contraction.
 - Can't, you're, who's (Cannot, you are, who is)

Note: "Its" is the possessive of it.

- Ex. The cat licked its fur.

Note: "It's" is the contraction for "it is."

- Ex. It's a nice day.

- Use an apostrophe before the "s" to indicate possession with nouns that are already plural.
 - The children's teacher brought them outside at recess.

- Use of apostrophe with names that end in "s": Either example is correct.
 - James' hat flew off his head. / James's hat flew off his head.

- Use of apostrophe with two names showing possession:
 - Use the apostrophe only with the last name listed.
 - Anne and Kurt's apartment is beautiful.
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Topic: Dash

Although other punctuation can often work, the dash can provide variety in your writing when you want to indicate an interruption or change of thought.

- Be careful when crossing that street—it's not very safe.
 - In this case, a colon or semicolon could also work.
- Can be used to interrupt a sentence and provide a change of voice.
 - We lost the game—hardly a surprise given our terrible effort—but at least our dreadful season was over.
- Can set off a parenthetical phrase. If you start with a dash at one end of the phrase, you must use a dash at the other end for consistency.
 - Test anxiety—something that affects many students—can be managed by setting realistic expectations for test performance.