

SEMICOLON RULES

Lists, punctuation, and common mistakes



1. In Complex Lists

Use semicolons when list items already contain commas.



EXAMPLE

Karachi, Pakistan; Dubai, UAE; and London, England



This makes each item clear.

2. Semicolon vs Comma



Semicolon

Joins related complete sentences

The shop was closed; we went home.



Comma

Used in lists or before *and*, *but*, *so*

The shop was closed, so we went home.



A comma alone cannot join two complete sentences.

3. Semicolon vs Colon



Semicolon

Connects related ideas

The plan changed;
we left early.

Colon

Introduces something

We need three things;
paper, glue, and scissors.

4. Common Mistakes



I stayed, it was late.



I stayed; it was late.



The bus was late; but we waited.



The bus was late, but we waited.



It rained; because the sky was dark.



It rained because the sky was dark.



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When and how to use ; correctly

1. Join Related Clauses

Use a semicolon to join two complete sentences with a close connection.



EXAMPLE

The rain stopped;
we continued our journey.

✓ Both sides are complete ideas.

2. With Linking Adverbs

Use a semicolon before words like *however*, *therefore*, and *otherwise*.



clause ; **however**, clause

| The room was small; **however**, it was comfortable.

| Leave now; **otherwise**, you may miss the bus.

3. Quick Reminder



Stronger than a comma



Weaker than a full stop



Best for closely connected ideas



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