

Semicolon

APSU Writing Center Handout

1. A semicolon is just a period stacked on top of a comma used to join two independent clauses without using a conjunction.

Conjunctions include For, and, nor, but, or, yet, and so.

2. Semicolons *are not* interchangeable with commas or periods. An incorrect usage of the semicolon could look like:

Incorrect: I like Italy; because of the food and the people.

3. Third, you *cannot* use a conjunction with the semicolon. An incorrect example would be:

Incorrect: She slept; and he studied.

Correct: She slept; he studied.

Serial List

Use a semicolon to divide the items of a list that are long or contain internal punctuation, such as when listing dates or locations.

Correct: I need the weather statistics for the following cities: London, England; London, Ontario; Paris, France; Paris, Ontario; Perth, Scotland; Perth, Ontario.

Correct: My plan included taking him to a nice—though not necessarily expensive—dinner; going to the park to look at the stars, which, by the way, are amazing this time of year; and serenading him with my accordion.