

## Semicolons

Using semicolons can help you vary your sentence structure to form more complex sentences and create more sophisticated prose.

1. **Use a semicolon in place of a period to separate two sentences where the conjunction has been left out.**

**Examples:**

*Call me next Tuesday; I will give you my answer then.*

*I have paid my dues; therefore, I expect all the privileges listed in the contract.*

2. **It is preferable to use a semicolon before introductory words such as namely, however, therefore, that is, i.e., for example, e.g., or for instance when they introduce a complete sentence. It is also preferable to use a comma after the introductory word.**

**Examples:**

*You will want to bring many backpacking items; for example, sleeping bags, pans, and warm clothing will make the trip better.*

*As we discussed, you will bring two items; specifically, a sleeping bag and a tent are not optional.*

3. **Use the semicolon to separate units of a series when one or more of the units contain commas.**

**Example:**

*This conference has people who have come from Boise, Idaho; Los Angeles, California; and Nashville, Tennessee.*

4. **Use the semicolon between two sentences joined by a coordinating conjunction (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so) when one or more commas appear in the first sentence.**

**Examples:**

*When I finish here, I will be glad to help you; that is a promise I will keep.*

*If she can, she will attempt that feat; if her husband is able, he will be there to see her.*