

26.3 Semicolons • Practice 1

Semicolons Used to Join Independent Clauses Use a semicolon to join independent clauses that are not already joined by the conjunctions *and*, *or*, *nor*, *for*, *but*, *so*, or *yet*.

INDEPENDENT CLAUSES

Pam felt confident going into the test; she had studied very hard.
 Put your napkin on your lap; don't tuck it into your shirt.

Semicolons Used to Avoid Confusion Consider the use of a semicolon to avoid confusion when items in a series already contain commas.

TO AVOID CONFUSION

Beth Meyers, a freshman at Penn State; Hugh Gibbons, a high-school senior; and Fran Kirby, a secretary, were contestants on the game show.
 Some of the most popular selections at the concert were "Hey, Jude," a Beatles hit; "People Will Say We're in Love," a song from the musical *Oklahoma*; and "Pomp and Circumstance," a march by Edward Elgar.

Exercise 1 Using Semicolons to Join Independent Clauses. Rewrite each pair of sentences below as a compound sentence in which two independent clauses are joined by a semicolon.

EXAMPLE: Kim is eight years older than her brothers. She often baby-sits for them.
Kim is eight years older than her brothers; she often baby-sits for them.

1. Gradually the water evaporates. The salt forms crystals.

2. Most of my friends will go to public high school. A few will go away to boarding school.

3. Their new home is beautiful. No one would guess it was once a barn.

4. Jeremy is an excellent soccer player. His brother prefers baseball.

5. Pat can help you with that problem. She is a terrific math student.

Exercise 2 Using Semicolons to Avoid Confusion. Circle any comma in these sentences that should be a semicolon.

EXAMPLE: We ordered soup, which was cold, roast beef, which was overcooked, and salad.

1. Alana, who lives in the next apartment, Louise, who is in my homeroom, and Marcia, whom I have known since kindergarten, are my best friends.
2. The waitress announced, "Our soups today are New England clam chowder, which is made with clams, potatoes, and cream, minestrone, a hearty Italian vegetable soup, and mulligatawny, a meat soup with curry seasoning."
3. On our trip across the country, my favorite cities were Boston, Massachusetts, Cincinnati, Ohio, and Portland, Oregon.

26.3 Semicolons • Practice 2

Exercise 1 Using Semicolons to Join Independent Clauses. Semicolons have been left out of the following sentences. Insert semicolons where they are required.

EXAMPLE: *Becky is fascinated by sharks however, she has not yet met one close up.
Becky is fascinated by sharks; however, she has not yet met one close up.*

1. Some cheeses are made from cow's milk others are made from goat's milk.
2. They decided not to go shopping instead, they went walking in the park.
3. This glass lens is concave the other is convex.
4. Ten goldfish swam in the pond their scales glinted in the sun.
5. This home used to be a one-room schoolhouse it was built over a century ago.

Exercise 2 Using Semicolons to Avoid Confusion. Add semicolons where they should be used in the following sentences.

EXAMPLE: *They received cards from Honolulu, Hawaii Phoenix, Arizona and Seattle, Washington.
They received cards from Honolulu, Hawaii; Phoenix, Arizona; and Seattle, Washington.*

1. We were served onion soup topped with melted cheese homemade rye bread, covered with butter and fruit salad, made with six different kinds of fresh fruit.
2. The little girl was wearing a yellow raincoat, which was made of shiny vinyl a matching hat, which was tied neatly under her chin and red boots, which reached to her knees.
3. In less than a year, William had expanded the family to include a large woolly dog with a huge appetite two skinny, stray cats with unfriendly dispositions and a pair of cooing, fluttering pigeons.
4. The music was performed by Fred, who played the flute Samantha, who played the clarinet and Ella, who played the saxophone.
5. Richard, my cousin Donna, the girl next door and Liz, my best friend, went to the concert with me.

Writing Application Using Semicolons in Your Own Writing. Write two different sentences for each of the following items.

1. Use a semicolon to join two closely related, independent clauses.

2. Use a semicolon to separate a series of items already containing several commas.

