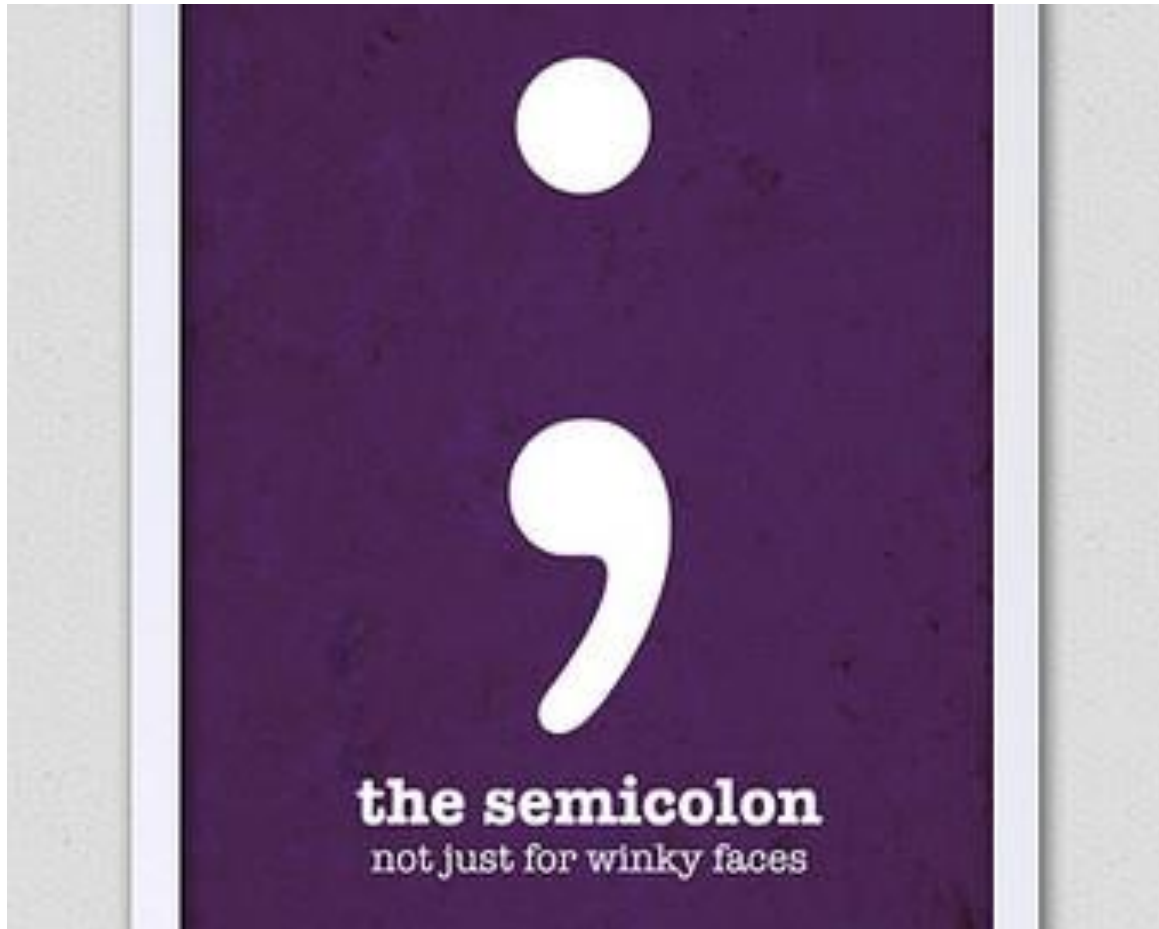


Picky

Punctuation:

Semicolons

and Colons

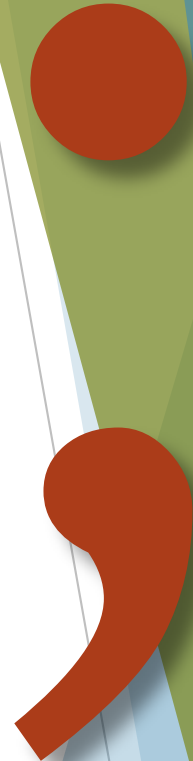


the semicolon
not just for winky faces

What IS a semicolon?

A semicolon is a punctuation mark used to connect independent clauses; it indicates a closer relation than does a period.

Study the following slides to learn the rules for using semicolons. This will help you use semicolons correctly. Work to master these rules so that you use the semicolon for more than creating a “winky face.”



- Use a **semicolon** to join two or more closely related independent clauses that are not connected with a coordinating conjunction. In other words, each of the clauses could stand alone as a separate sentence.

“I was thrown out of college for cheating on the metaphysics exam; I looked into the soul of the boy next to me.”

-Woody Allen

- Note the placement of the semicolon.

- Use a **semicolon** before a conjunctive adverb when the word clarifies the relationship between two independent clauses in a compound sentence. A comma often follows the conjunctive adverb. Common conjunctive adverbs include *also*, *besides*, *however*, *instead*, *meanwhile*, *then*, and *therefore*.

Many college freshmen are on their own for the first time; however, others are already independent and even have families.

- Note the placement of the semicolon.

- Use a **semicolon** to separate items in a series that already contains commas.

New officers for this year's Earth Club are David Smart, president; Susan Smiley, vice president; Javon Friends, secretary; and Shay Winner, treasurer.

- Note the placement of the semicolons.

What IS a colon?

A colon is a punctuation mark used after a statement (usually an independent clause) that introduces a quotation, an explanation, an example, or a series.

Study the following slides to learn the rules for using colons. This will help you use colons correctly.

Work to master these rules so that you can use the colon in your writing with confidence.

➤ Use a colon between a title and subtitle, volume and page, and chapter and verse.

- *Perrine's Story and Structure: An Introduction to Fiction*
- *Britannica 2:211*
- *Psalm 23: 1-6*

➤ Note the placement of the colons.

➤ Use a colon to introduce quotations.

- *Poet Maya Angelou offered this advice for life: “Try to be a rainbow in someone’s cloud.”*
- *Former U.S. President Ronald Reagan also advocated thinking of others: “We can’t help everyone, but everyone can help someone.”*
 - Note the placement of the colons.

- Use a colon to introduce a list following a complete sentence.

A college student needs a number of things to succeed: basic skills, persistence, and determination.

- Note the placement of the colon.

➤ Avoid colon errors.

Do not use a colon between a verb and its object or complement.

X Dave likes: comfortable space and time to think. (Incorrect)

✓ Dave likes two things: comfortable space and time to think. (Correct)