

SEMICOLONS

Semicolons are punctuation marks which help to connect, separate, and clarify.

SEPARATING INDEPENDENT CLAUSES

Semicolons are used to separate closely related independent clauses (i.e., complete sentences).

EX:

The native grabbed the cup; he did not know what to do with it.

Notice how the first letter of the second sentence is not capitalized. Do not capitalize the word unless the word can be capitalized in the middle of a sentence (as in proper nouns and "I").

SEPARATING CLAUSES IN A SERIES

Semicolons are used to separate independent clauses in a series.

EX:

I do not like this guy; he is mean; he is vague; and, I do not understand him.

ITEMS IN A SERIES WHICH CONTAIN COMMAS

Semicolons are used to help separate items-in-a-series which already contain commas.

EX:

When you have your party, you should invite Carolyn, Shaun's wife; Stacy, Dean's wife; Jennifer, Ted's wife; and, Samantha, Jerry's wife.

SEPARATING INDEPENDENT CLAUSES WITH CONJUNCTIVE ADVERBS OR CONJUNCTIONS

Semi-colons are used to separate independent clauses with conjunctive adverbs, short introductory elements, or conjunctions.

EX:

I love to go to the movies; however, my wife always wants to see these unsettling feminine dramas.

Note that a comma must be used immediately following the conjunctive adverb, short introductory element, or conjunction.

Memorize this little formula (to use when separating clauses):

; + **conjunctive adverb** + ,

EX:

My wife took me to see *Pride & Prejudice*; **additionally**, she took me to see *Sense & Sensibility*.