**The Semicolon**

**Semicolon**: in between a comma and a period.

**1. Use a semicolon to join independent clauses that are not already joined by conjunctions such as *and, but, for, nor, or, so, yet***

**Correct**: My sister excels at art**,** **but** I can barely draw a straight line.

**Correct**: My sister excels at art**;** I can barely draw a straight line.

DO NOT use a semicolon to connect two UNRELATED independent clauses

**Incorrect**: Astronauts train for their missions; tomorrow, rain is expected.

**Correct**: Astronauts train for their missions; it is essential that they are prepared and ready for challenges on the mission.

**2. Use a semicolon to join independent clauses separated by either a conjunctive adverb or a transitional expression.**

List of common conjunctive adverbs:

***Also, besides, consequently, furthermore, however, indeed, instead, moreover, nevertheless, otherwise, therefore, thus***

Transitional expressions:

***as a result, at this time, first, for instance, in fact, on the other hand, second, that is,***

**Correct**: I am going to do my homework; however, I must call my friend first.

**Correct**: We needed to get the tire into the trunk; as a result, we had to unload the trunk.

**BUT…Use a semicolon only when there is an independent clause on each side of the conjunctive adverb or transitional expression.**

**Correct:** The flight was, consequently, cancelled.

**Incorrect:** The flight was; consequently, cancelled.

**3. The semicolon is also used to AVOID CONFUSION in sentences that contain other internal punctuation.**

A. Consider the use of semicolons when independent clauses already contain commas.

**Correct**: The astronauts were William Anders, Frank Borman, and James Lovell; but they did not land on the moon.

B. Use a semicolon between items in a series if the items themselves contain commas.

**Correct:** Some of the women in space include the Russian, Valentina Tereshkova, who orbited Earth in 1963; Sally Ride, the first American woman in space; and Christa McAuliffe, who was killed in the tragic accident in the shuttle *Challenger.*

**Correct:** I sent notes to Mr. Nielson, my science teacher; Mrs. Jensen, my history instructore; and Mrs. Seltz, the librarian.

**The Colon**

**The colon:** acts as an introductory device.

**1. Use a colon before a list of items following an independent clause**

**\*If you see the word “following,” it is a good clue a colon is needed.**

**Correct:** At the grocery store, pick up the following items: milk, eggs, bread, cheese, and cereal.

**Correct:** He had the right qualities to be an astronaut: courage, fitness, and commitment.

**2. Use a colon to introduce a quotation that is formal or lengthy or a quotation that does not contain a “he said/she said” expression.**

**Correct:** The speaker began with these words: “I have never been so honored in all my life.”

**3. Use a colon to introduce a sentence that summariezes the sentence before it.**

**Correct:** The teacher gave one piece of advice: study for the test.

**Correct:** He asked her one question: will you show me how to change the oil?

**4. Use a colon to introduce a formal appositive that follows an independent clause.**

**\*The appositive does not need to be an independent clause.**

**Correct:** The flight ended in an accident: a sudden loss of air in the cabin.

**Incorrect:** We decided to: see an old movie.

**Correct:** We decided to see an old movie: *The Right Stuff.*

**Correct:** Martin’s father took him to look at a new sight: Earth.

5. Also use colons when writing numbers (5:22am); when referencing the Bible (Genesis 3:15); and labels (Warning: cigarettes can be hazardous to your health).

**Quotation Marks**

1. **Use quotation marks ONLY For direct quotes.**

He said, “I think I’ll go for a walk.”

“I think I’ll go for a walk,” she said.

“I think I’ll go for a walk,” they said, “since the day is so warm.”

“Should we expect the train any time soon?” he asked. “It was late yesterday.”

1. **ALWAYS place a comma or a period INSIDE the final quotation mark.**

He said, “I think I’ll go for a walk.”

“I think I’ll go for a walk,” she said.

1. **ALWAYS place a semicolon or colon OUTSIDE the final quotation mark.**

The book reports, “John Stevens built the first locomotive”; however, the book has many flaws.

1. **Place a question mark of exclamation mark INSIDE the final quotation mark if the end mark is part of the quotation.**

He said, “How are you?”

“Where are you going?” he said.

***\*\*Note: the direct quote, “Where are you going?” is THE QUESTION. Put the question mark within the quotation marks.***

1. **Place a question mark or exclamation mark OUTSIDE the final quotation mark if the end mark is not part of the quotation.**

Did you hear him say “The time is now”?

***\*\*Note: the direct quote, “The time is now” is NOT a question. The whole sentence is the question!***

1. **When writing dialogue, begin a new paragraph EACH TIME the speaker changes.**

The boy asked his mother, “Can I stay up late again tonight? I need to work on this project.”

“Sure,” she replied.

“Thank you,” said the boy. “I appreciate your kind understanding.”

1. **Use single quotation marks for a quotation within a quotation.**

The speaker concluded, saying, “Let us not forget the old English proverb that states, ‘Where there’s a will, there’s a way.’”