

Semicolon

The Semicolon

Reference: *The LB Brief Handbook*, 5th ed., pgs. 322-326.

Basic Rules:

- **A semicolon precedes an independent clause that begins with a transitional word such as “however,” “therefore,” “nevertheless,” etc.** Notice that a comma follows this type of connecting word.
 - **Example:** The store will be open late on Fridays and Saturdays; *however*, it will be closed all day on Sundays.
 - **Example:** The student felt mentally fatigued and physically tired; *nevertheless*, he was determined to finish writing his essay before he went to bed.
- **A semicolon also precedes an independent clause that begins with a transitional phrase such as “for example,” “for instance,” etc.** Notice that a comma follows this type of connecting phrase.
 - **Example:** Basil is omnipresent in the cuisine of some countries; *for example*, Italians use basil in salads, soups, and many vegetable dishes.
 - **Example:** The detective warned the neighbors that there better not be any more disturbances; *for instance*, entertaining loud parties in the middle of the night.
- **A semicolon joins two independent clauses that are closely related, which generally signals addition or contrast.**
 - **Example:** One of the owners comes from this area; the other grew up in Costa Rica.
 - (*The two clauses show contrast.*)
 - **Example:** For many cooks, basil is a key ingredient; it appears in recipes worldwide.
 - (*The second clause shows addition to or support for the first.*)
- **A semicolon is used between main clauses or series items that contain commas.**
 - **Example:** Major League Baseball features teams in Chicago, Illinois; Cleveland, Ohio; St. Louis, Missouri; and Los Angeles, California.