

Using the Semi-Colon

VOCABULARY

Independent Clause

A group of words, including a subject and verb, which can stand alone as a complete sentence.

Conjunctive Adverb

A word that joins together two independent clauses (e.g., therefore, thus, in addition, moreover, likewise, etc.).

THE RULE

Use a semi-colon to combine two independent clauses into one sentence with or without a conjunctive adverb. In addition, use a semi-colon when separating items in a list that already contain commas.

PRACTICE *Using Semi-colons with Independent Clauses*

Error: I could not get coffee today, Rinnova was closed.

Correction: I could not get coffee today; Rinnova was closed.

PRACTICE *Using Semi-colons with Conjunctive Adverbs*

Error: Literary Analysis is the most challenging course on this campus, therefore, I highly recommend taking it.

Correction: Literary Analysis is the most challenging course on this campus; therefore, I highly recommend taking it.

PRACTICE *When to use Semi-colons in a List*

Error: The students in my unit are from Ontario, Canada, Anchorage, Alaska, and Nashville, Tennessee.

Correction: The students in my unit are from Ontario, Canada; Anchorage, Alaska; and Nashville, Tennessee.