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the semicolon does jobs that are done by other punctuation marks but puts its own spin on the task this usage guide will show you how with several examples a semicolon may be used between independent clauses joined by a connector such as and but or nor etc when one or more commas appear in the first clause example when i finish here and i will soon i II be glad to help you and that is a promise i will keep most commonly the semicolon is used between two independent clauses i e clauses that could stand alone as separate sentences when a coordinating conjunction for and nor but or yet so is omitted the semicolon is a good punctuation mark to have in your back pocket or on top of your parenthetical smile so whether you re using it to whip up a good complex sentence or to give someone a wink now you know how to do it right a semicolon is an incredibly powerful punctuation mark that can be used for a few different respective languages from joining two independent clauses to providing emphasis or even connecting phrases the semicolon has become a versatile tool in any writer s repertoire table of contents four ways to use semicolons use of semicolons explained in detail 1 using semicolons to separate list items 2 using a semicolon to create a smooth transition between two sentences 3 to create a smooth transition into a sentence starting with a transitional phrases paige introduces a piece of punctuation called the semicolon this punctuation can link closely related independent clauses together in a sentence created by david rheinstrom a semicolon is a punctuation mark used to separate closely related sentences use a semicolon to link two closely related independent clauses semicolons separate two independent clauses that contain related information an independent clause is a group of words containing subject and a verb that expresses a complete thought a semicolon can be used to connect two closely related independent clauses parts of a sentence that could also stand as separate sentences my car broke down this morning it s being fixed at the mechanic s garage now semicolons are also used to separate list items that contain internal punctuation such as commas and dashes semicolons are sometimes called the super comma but they are distinct enough to be their own punctuation mark and have different and specific functions from commas semicolons are most often used to separate two equal independent clauses within one complete sentence how to use a semicolon rules and examples semicolons are often misused in fact many who are new to writing and many who have been writing for years are intimidated by them and elect not to use them a semicolon is a punctuation mark that connects two separate but related thoughts they indicate a longer pause than a comma provides in a sentence but a shorter pause than a colon there s one main semicolon rule to remember when used in a sentence each side of the semicolon must include an independent clause a full sentence a semicolon is a punctuation mark that looks like a combination of a period and a comma like the one here shown in red they are mostly used in poems speeches and academic writing you probably won t see or use semicolons very often but knowing how to use semicolons will help you to understand them if you do see them this handout explains the most common uses of three kinds of punctuation semicolons colons and

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dashes after reading the handout you will be better able to decide when to use these forms of punctuation in your own writing there are three ways to use a semicolon in your writing as a link between two related independent clauses before a conjunctive adverb in the middle of a sentence in a list semicolons linking two related independent clauses semicolons are punctuation marks used to separate parts of sentences use a semicolon in the following instances two independent clauses use a semicolon when separating two independent clauses that are not joined by a conjunction example jones 2014 argued that intelligence was fixed smith 2011 argued that ability could be fluid commas and semicolons are punctuation marks used in writing to clarify meaning and separate sentence elements understanding how to use them correctly can greatly improve the clarity and coherence of your writing commas are used to separate items in a list to set off introductory elements to separate clauses when the first clause is the semicolon is one of the most misunderstood and misused punctuation marks in fact it is often mistaken for the colon which we II discuss next however these two punctuation marks are not interchangeable punctuation semicolons colons and parentheses a number of other punctuation marks are used less frequently but still play important roles in english writing semicolons are used to combine sentences into larger ones what is a semicolon used in different ways to the colon though just as selectively used the semicolon is a punctuation mark that resembles both a comma and a full stop the semicolon is in fact a combination of both of these marks

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