

Semi-colons



What are semi-colons?

Semi-colons are used in UKS2 and can be used in two different ways.

1. Semi-colons in a detailed list.

Semi-colons are used to separate more detailed items using phrases in a list. Semi-colons can avoid confusion as many of the phrases listed will contain commas.

The alien can be recognised by its unusual features: smooth, pointy nose; short tufts of thick, brown hair; and long, skinny legs.

I have been to many places: Newcastle, Carlisle, and York in the North; Bristol, Exeter, and Portsmouth in the South; and Cromer, Norwich, and Lincoln in the East.

When we go to Laches Wood, you will need to bring some warm, waterproof trousers; thick, woolly gloves; and some sturdy, lace-up walking boots.



2. Semi-colons can be used to link two complete sentences and turn them into one.

A semi-colon can sometimes be used to show a break in a sentence. It is stronger than a comma but not as final as a full stop.

Semi-colons are used to replace coordinating conjunctions (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so) so NEVER use a semi-colon with one.

Examples

The door swung open. A masked figure strode in.

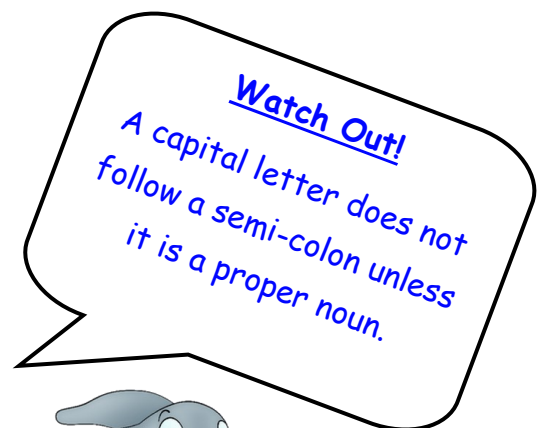
The door swung open **and** a masked figure strode in.

The door swung open; a masked figure strode in.

The rabbit had been sadly neglected. It was in an awful state.

The rabbit had been sadly neglected, **so** it was in an awful state.

The rabbit had been sadly neglected; it was in an awful state.



Watch out!

Never use a comma to join sentences together that are strongly linked. This is incorrect and is called comma splicing. If you want to join sentences, use a colon or a semi-colon.