

A semicolon (;) joins two sentences (independent clauses) that are closely related. Do not capitalize the first word of the second independent clause.

**Examples**

Cam Cameron is the Dolphins' coach; he replaced Nick Saban.

Doctor Smith is opening a new clinic; it is located in Okeechobee.

The fishing trip is cancelled; a hurricane is forming in the Caribbean.

Do not call her until afternoon; she works all morning at a doctor's office.

**Reminder**



**Be careful when punctuating sentences that use these words.**

**however**  
**therefore**  
**consequently**

**otherwise**  
**nevertheless**

**in fact**

**These words may introduce a new sentence or interrupt one sentence.**

If the word introduces a new sentence, place a semicolon in front of it and a comma after it. If the word interrupts one sentence, place commas on either side of it.

**To help determine the correct punctuation, take the word out of the Sentence and read it.**

**Examples**

**One sentence:** Pam, **however**, enjoys Mexican food.

Pam, **however**, enjoys Mexican food.

**Two sentences:** Jill likes French wine; **however**, Pam prefers German beer.

Jill likes French wine; **however**, Pam prefers German beer.

**One sentence:** He was, **therefore**, convicted of the crime.

He was, **therefore**, convicted of the crime.

**Two sentences:** He was convicted; **therefore**, he is going to prison.

He was convicted; **therefore**, he is going to prison.

**A semicolon (;) may be used between items in a series containing internal commas.**

### **Examples**

Our airplane made stops at Atlanta, Georgia; Dallas, Texas; Phoenix, Arizona; and Los Angeles, California.

Some of my favorite classic films are *To Have and Have Not*, Lauren Bacall's first appearance on screen; *McCabe and Mrs. Miller*, a grim western tale; and *Apocalypse Now*, an adaptation of Joseph Conrad's novel, *Heart of Darkness*.

**A colon (:) is used following an introduction. It should always follow a complete statement (independent clause, sentence). It usually introduces a list, a long quotation, or an explanation.**

### **Examples**

**You have three chores today:** cutting the grass, washing the car, and cleaning your room.

**Janet based her paper upon one quotation from Edward Abbey:** "The basic science is not physics or mathematics but biology—the study of life. We must learn to think both logically and bio-logically."

**Susan is afraid of only one thing:** spiders.

### **Practice 1 – Colons:**

**In the following sentences, insert colons where they are needed.**

1. We studied history, geography, and sociology in our French class.
2. We studied all about France in our French class: its history, its geography, and its social structure.
3. She had a poor excuse for being late: she forgot to set her alarm clock.
4. Mom ordered the following items: a box of candy, a good book, and a bouquet of flowers.
5. While you are at the store, pick up some milk, paper towels, and eggs.
6. Sharon is good at three sports: tennis, racquetball, and softball.
7. There are only two ways to do a job: the right way and the wrong way.
8. Writers need only one thing: an audience.

## **Practice 2 – Semicolons:**

**If a semicolon is necessary in the following sentences, insert as needed.**

1. In 1960 the average car could be counted on to run for approximately 40,000 miles; in 1990 the average car could be expected to run approximately 200,000 miles.
2. People interested in buying a dog should consider which breeds best fit their lifestyles; some breeds are much more active than others.
3. Many flight schools use simulators to train pilots; other flight schools believe practical experience is the only way to learn to fly.
4. Duct tape has become an essential item in many tool boxes; it is even used by astronauts to make repairs in space.
5. Drivers should consider tire purchase carefully; tires are usually designed for a certain type of vehicle and a certain type of road conditions.
6. Microwave ovens are considered a necessity in many modern kitchens, but frying pans are also considered an essential item.
7. Before leaving on a long trip, auto owners should check their radiator, belts, hoses, and tires to reduce their odds of breaking down on the road.
8. The prediction of hurricanes is based upon sophisticated instruments, scientific studies of weather patterns, and some pure guesswork by people who have devoted their lives to learning as much as they can about these powerful storms.
9. Many people don't realize that porpoises are mammals; they can drown if they get caught in fishing nets.
10. A psychologist usually has an advanced degree in psychology; however, a psychiatrist must also have a medical degree.
11. For the early Spanish explorers, Florida was a hot, dangerous, insect-infested environment; for today's tourists, it is a vacation wonderland.
12. Swiss milk products, including cottage cheese and ice cream, taste very different from U.S. dairy products; scientists believe the difference stems from the fact that Swiss dairy cattle still graze in pristine pastures while American herds are fed a blend of grain products.
13. A car with an automatic transmission gets less gas mileage than a car with a standard transmission; however, many people do not know how to shift gears manually.

14. Cable television networks often contract small production crews to film special features that require travel to remote locations; sometimes these locations require working in dangerous situations, such as civil strife or actual war.
15. Many expensive automobiles feature leather interiors; however, leather gets extremely hot in the summer and cold in the winter.
16. Most of the students in her class, however, decided to skip the field trip and remain at the school, creating a need for a substitute teacher.
17. Nature has provided many animals with unusual means to escape predators; skunks, for example, give off foul odors, and porcupines are covered with sharp quills.
18. The Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institution in St. Lucie County has attracted international acclaim for its achievements in research and development and its efforts to save endangered mammals.
19. She left her trash on the table; I can't believe it.
20. We had expected a long, hot drive across Nebraska; it was.
21. He told us that his daughter lived in Cheyenne, Wyoming; San Luis Obispo, California; and Port St. Lucie, Florida.
22. We're having a party tonight; it starts at 8.
23. The car rolled down the hill and onto the baseball field; luckily, no one was injured.
24. As the hurricane moved toward Florida, people were told to take all necessary safety precautions because it was one of the most powerful storms ever reported.
25. This morning she had barbecue for breakfast; yesterday, she started the day with a hamburger.
26. Construction is scheduled on U.S. 1 this morning; take a different route.
27. The little girl read the patriotic poem with expression and emotion.
28. She advised me to study; I did.
29. Sandra wanted to join the FBI, so she started training by running on the beach every morning and lifting weights every other evening.
30. The docks in downtown Fort Pierce are full of visiting boats; it is interesting to read their names and home ports, which are usually written on the sterns.