

# Literacy Moment: Week Beginning 03/10/16





# Week 5: The Semi-Colon (;)

1. What do you remember about the **semi-colon** from last week's session?
2. Can you describe it and its uses using **technical vocabulary**?

## How to use a semicolon

The most feared punctuation on earth

Created by The Oatmeal

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“ Using a semicolon isn't hard; I once saw a party gorilla do it. ”

Can you remember what 'comma splicing' is?  
How do we avoid it?

# Week 5: The Semi-Colon (;)

A semi colon is used in place of a full stop, to join two main clauses together. It is used when the information of both main clauses is on a similar theme.

Here are our paragraphs from last week...could we use semi-colons anywhere?

**I ate an entire pizza. It was absolutely delicious, topped with bubbling melted mozzarella and slices of spicy pepperoni arranged lovingly on top.**

**After I'd finished, I needed a lie-down. It was one of the greatest things I've ever eaten. And I've eaten a deep-fried Mars bar.**

**Hint: You may have to change a few words around...**

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I ate an entire pizza; it was absolutely delicious. It was topped with bubbling, melted mozzarella and slices of spicy pepperoni arranged lovingly on top.

After I'd finished, I needed a lie-down. It was one of the greatest things I've ever eaten; I can't wait to have another one!

You'll notice a few words have changed to use the semi-colons, but they indicate that you can **change your sentence structure** for effect!

We don't want to **overuse** the semi-colon, but being able to use it really adds variety to your sentences...examiners love it!

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Here's a **technical definition** of the semi-colon. Do you understand it?

**Semi-colon (noun)**: The **semicolon** or **semi-colon** (;) is a punctuation mark that separates major sentence elements. A **semi-colon** can be used between two closely related independent clauses, provided they are not already joined by a coordinating conjunction.

Remember, '**conjunction**'  
is the technical term for  
'**connective**'!

Write two simple  
sentences on a similar  
subject, and link them with  
a semi colon!

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Where should the semi-colon go in these sentences?

1. I went to the shop and I bought some cheese.
2. Mike ran fast so he won the race.
3. I wasn't sure because I had no idea!

You'll notice that to do this you just **replace the connective with a semi-colon!**

1. I went to the shop; I bought some cheese.
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Separating two main clauses with a comma is called '**comma splicing**'. Using a semi-colon can avoid this.

*Remember to check your work...are you writing main clauses or subordinate clauses? This will help you choose the correct punctuation!*

***These examples are from last week; remind yourself!:***

1. I was tired, so I went to bed.
2. I was tired. I went to bed.
3. I was tired; I went to bed.

Notice how the **comma** is only used when **the sentence contains a subordinate clause** (often indicated by a connective!).

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I've got all these commas!  
How can we ever be together  
without forming a run-on sentence?!

Nothing can stop true love.  
Use a semicolon, you fool!



# Key Words from Today's Session...

**Semi-colon:** A punctuation mark used in place of a conjunction to join two main clauses.

**Main clause:** A part of a sentence that makes sense on its own.

**Subordinate clause:** A part of a sentence which doesn't make sense on its own.

**Full Stop:** A punctuation mark to indicate the end of a sentence. It should be followed by a capital letter.

**Comma:** A punctuation mark used to separate a **main clause** and a **subordinate clause**.