Semicolons
Semicolons provide readers with a pause between two related independent clauses. There are only three reasons to use a semicolon:

1. To link two closely related independent clauses without a connecting word
2. To link two independent clauses connected by a conjunctive adverb
3. To separate items in a series in which the individual items contain punctuation

Linking two closely related independent clauses:
When you have a strong or even subtle connection between two independent clauses, you may link those clauses with a semicolon.

- Examples:
  1. No one heard the policeman’s warning; one by one they fell into the sink hole.
  2. We heard the tree limbs snap and fall to the ice covered ground; there was nothing we could do to save our trees.

Linking two independent clauses joined by a conjunctive adverb or transitional expression:
Common conjunctive adverbs: moreover, therefore, however, and indeed
Common transitional phrases: in addition, in fact, and for example.

- Examples:
  1. I love the long, cold winter months; however, I still look forward to spring.
  2. The small car had much more room than I had imagined; in fact, there was enough room for all of us to comfortably drive to the hotel.

Note, when you use a semicolon to link two sentences separated by either a coordinating conjunction or a transitional phrase, the semicolon is placed after the last word of the first independent clause followed by the conjunctive adverb or transitional phrase then a comma.

Linking two independent clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction in which one or both of the clauses have commas or the clauses or phrases are long.

- Examples:
  1. The doctors said that John could not eat any pork, creamy sauces, or fried foods; that he had to quit smoking, drinking, and taking over the counter pain meds; and finally that John had to exercise, lift weights, and sleep eight hours a night if he wanted to live to see his sixtieth birthday.
  2. The commission found that company funds were channeled to special accounts; that the company executives were paying for their extravagant life styles with lavish expense accounts; and that the employees’ retirement account had been used to fund personal international trips.