

# Grammar Lesson 2 - Semicolon

In this grammar lesson, we will learn how to correctly use the semicolon.

## 1. **Semicolons with independent clauses:**

Semicolons can replace a sentence containing a comma as well as a coordinating conjunction. For example, in the following sentence we can replace the comma and the coordinating conjunction with,

“John finished all of his homework, but Ron did not finish his.”

“John finished all of his homework; Ron did not finish his.”

**Note:** Do not use a semicolon between a dependent and independent clause.

*Correct :* "Although Nate is a good worker, that new guy is not"

*Incorrect :* "Although Nate is a good worker; that new guy is not"

**What is wrong:** Because a semicolon is supposed to assume the role of a coordinating conjunction, the semicolon makes it sound like "Although Nate is a good worker, and that new guy is not" (or any other coordinating conjunction), the semicolon in this case makes the "new guy" independent from Nate, while we are trying to judge the new guy relative to Nate.

## 2. **Semicolons with conjunctive adverbs :**

*conjunctive adverbs:* For example, for instance, that is, besides, furthermore, moreover, otherwise, however, thus, therefore.

Instead of ending an idea with a period and starting a new sentence with a conjunctive adverb related to the previous sentence, you can simply suffix the first sentence with a semicolon. For example,

“Mary worked tirelessly on all her homework; nevertheless, she was unable to finish it.”

“Harvey is a good driver; moreover, he is a friendly one.”

## **Citation:**

Semicolon, Effective Writing Practice Tutorial, Northern Illinois University.