**Semicolons**

* **Your Diagnosis.** You have joined two related sentences without proper punctuation. Perhaps you used a **comma**, or worse, used no **punctuation** at all! Perhaps you are **listing items in a series** that also include **commas**. You are in need of a **semicolon**.
* **Your Treatment Plan**. Look for **run-on sentences** and **comma** **splices** which occur when you have two or more independent clauses without proper punctuation. **It’s important to remember that** [**an independent clause**](https://pensacolastate.instructure.com/courses/1325752/modules/items/12427598) **is the same as a complete sentence.** Also, remember that in order to avoid confusion, a **semicolon** must be used to separate **items in a series** that already contain **commas**.
* **The Cure!** Place a **semicolon** **between two related independent clauses**. These are easy to recognize because they typically have two **subjects** and two [**verbs**](https://pensacolastate.instructure.com/courses/1325752/modules/items/17035060). Also **use semicolons to separate items in a series that already contain commas**. You may need to use our [**Run-Ons Sentences & Comma Splices**](https://pensacolastate.instructure.com/courses/1325752/modules/items/17150510)worksheet to review and practice if you are not able to identify these on your own.

cartoon-eyes[1] **Be on the lookout for…**

**Comma splices and run-ons:**

* + **EXAMPLE OF A COMMA SPLICE:** In 18oo, it took six weeks to get from New York City to Chicago**,** in 1860, the trip by railroad took two days.
    - *I can’t put a comma at the end of a complete sentence, can I?*
  + **REVISED:** In 18oo, it took six weeks to get from New York City to Chicago**;** in 1860, the trip by railroad took two days.

**Using a comma to connect two independent clauses joined by a transitional phrase:**

* + **INCORRECT PUNCTUATION**: Many corals grow gradually**,** in fact, the creation of a coral reef can take centuries.
    - *Do I see two subjects and two verbs? Do I have two separate sentences here?*
  + **REVISED**: Many corals grow gradually**;** in fact, the creation of a coral reef can take centuries.

**Items in a series that already have commas:**

* + **ITEMS IN A SERIES CAUSE CONFUSION**: I’ve lived in Pensacola, Florida**,** Mobile, Alabama**,** and New Orleans, Louisiana.
    - *How many items are listed here? Three or six?*
  + **REVISED**: I’ve lived in Pensacola, Florida**;** Mobile Alabama**;** and New Orleans, Louisiana.

**Try it out! Complete the practice exercises on the OTHER SIDE of this page.  🡪**

**Put a semicolon where needed in the following sentences. You may have to replace another type of punctuation. Write “C” if the sentence is correct.**

1. I knew how to do the basic work on the job however, it took me a while to learn the technical aspects of the job.
2. We will be going to Nashville, Tennessee Duluth, Minnesota and Chicago, Illinois on our vacation this summer.
3. Margaret was not surprised to see hail and vivid lightning, conditions had been right for violent weather all day.
4. Severe pain is a ravaging force; especially when the patient is hiding it from others.
5. We studied Robert Frost, a poet, Oscar Wilde, a playwright and Jane Austen, a novelist.