

Semicolons

Use a semicolon when

1. you are connecting two independent clauses that are related.

The firefighter was strong; he could lift two people at once.

2. a list already contains commas.

I have traveled to Brockton, Massachusetts; Andrews, South Carolina; and Dacula, Georgia.

3. a conjunctive adverb (adverbs that join independent clauses) or a transition is used at the start of the second independent clause.

I love going to the beach; however, I can't stay out in the sun for too long.

This is my first time at a baseball stadium; in fact, I've never even watched an entire game on TV.

4. two sentences are joined by a conjunction, but there is already a comma in the first independent clause.

When you are free, I will take you to the movies; and that is a date that I will not miss.

Exercises

Decide whether these sentences need a semicolon, a period, a comma, or nothing.

1. My favorite baseball team has played games in New York, New York Tampa Bay, Florida and Oakland, California.
2. At lunchtime, I like to eat a peanut butter and banana sandwich so that's what I usually make.
3. I like to hike and fish.
4. I am an excellent soccer goalie my sister is good at math.
5. My sister hates hot weather on the other hand she hates cold weather as well.
6. The world is a very big place I hope to see most of it someday.

Key:

1. My favorite baseball team has played games in New York, New York; Tampa Bay, Florida; and Oakland, California.
2. At lunchtime, I like to eat a peanut butter and banana sandwich; so that's what I usually make.
3. I like to hike and fish.
4. I am an excellent soccer goalie. My sister is good at math.
5. My sister hates hot weather; on the other hand, she hates cold weather too.
6. The world is a very big place; I hope to see most of it someday.