Semicolon vs. Colon...And What is a Comma Splice?

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Colons

- As a sentence connector, the colon is rather specialized.
- Unlike the semicolon, which connects sentences with the meaning of and, the colon makes an announcement of sorts.
- The colon signals an appositive or a list
Semicolon

- Use a semicolon between the clauses of a compound sentence when a conjunctive adverb (such as nonetheless, however, therefore) or an adverbial phrase (such as in that case, as a result, on the other hand) introduces the second clause.
  - EX: The issues were difficult to sort out; however, the judges had to make a decision.
  - The contract negotiations lasted for two years; as a result, many workers quit their jobs and found other ones.
Semicolon cont...

• Use a semicolon between independent clauses not joined by a coordinating conjunction:
  – EX: There’s a difference between the music of Back and Mozart; it is a difference worth discovering (361).
Semicolon cont...

- Use a semicolon between clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction if one or both of the clauses includes commas:
  - During the Italian Renaissance the inside of the pomegranate, which is divided into compartment containing colorful seeds, was the basis for a popular fabric design; and in the Middle East this beautiful fruit figured prominently in the decorative arts (361).
Semicolon cont...

• Use a colon between the clauses of a compound sentence when the second clause explains or amplifies the first clause.
  • EX: After reading the letter, he did something that surprised me: He laughed and tore it up.
  • EX: My uncle was not wasteful: he was uncommonly thrifty..
When to Use Commas

• To separate three or more items in a series or list:

  • EX: Tacos, cheeseburgers, and low-carb salads are the most popular foods served in the cafeteria (362).
When to Use Commas

• You may use a comma with compound elements when the conjunction is but:
  • *I love mangos and peaches, but not apricots*

• You may also use a comma to give special emphasis to the second element in a compound:
  • *The judge listened to our side of the story, and then ruled against us.*
When to Use Commas

• Use commas to set off phrases or clauses that merely comment on the nouns they modify, rather than defining or restricting their meaning.

• Use commas to set off transitional phrases and parenthetical comments that interrupt the flow of the sentence:
  
  • *Honesty, in my opinion, should always be tempered with kindness.*
When to Use Commas

• Use commas to set off nouns of direct address:
  – The fact is, my friends, we have no choice in this matter.
  – Mr. Ortiz, can you send us a copy of the accident report?
When to Use Commas

- Use a comma to set off the reporting tag (e.g., she said, he replied, Darwin observed) from a different quotation:
  
  - "No one can make you feel inferior," Eleanor Roosevelt said, "without your consent."
When to Use Commas...

- Put a comma after introductory structures such as:
  - A long prepositional phrase
  - A single-word sentence modifier
  - Adverbial clause or verb phrase
  - Absolute phrase
  - Participial phrase
Comma Splices

• A Comma Splice occurs when the comma is used without the conjunction and produces a nonconventional connection (361).
• A comma splice occurs when you use a comma to join two complete sentences without placing an appropriate joining word between them.
• The comma just isn't strong enough to do the job of making one grammatical sentence out of two.
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