USING SEMICOLONS

Semicolons are used for making lists clearer and for controlling the flow of text from one sentence to the next. The use of semicolons is becoming more common in writing, but you could never using semicolons because there is always another way to write without the semicolon.

Semicolons are used:
- In lists when the list items contain commas
- To merge two short, choppy sentences into one longer sentence
- To create a smoother transition between sentences, particularly when the second starts with a phrase like however or as a result
- Before a conjunction which merges two sentences containing commas

USING SEMICOLONS IN A LIST

Semicolons can be used in lists to avoid confusion with any commas that may appear in list items. In a normal list, the list items are separated by commas. However, sometimes the list items themselves contain commas. When this happens, you can use semicolons to separate them.

*Example:* Brian, the officer in charge; Mark, the chef; and Ollie, my dog, were the only people I trusted.

USING SEMICOLONS TO EXTEND A SENTENCE

A semicolon can be used to replace a full stop period when a smoother transition is required between sentences, and to avoid having a paper filled with short, choppy sentences.

*Examples:* It was serious; she broke a toe.
             It was freezing; however, we still enjoyed it.

USING SEMICOLONS BEFORE TRANSITIONAL PHRASES

When merging two sentences into one, the second sentence will start with a transitional phrase. Common transitional phrases are as a result, consequently, therefore, and however. These terms will normally start a sentence, but it is possible to create a
smoother transition by replacing the full stop period before this phrase with a semicolon.

*Examples: She broke her toe; as a result, the game was cancelled.
Vacation used to be a luxury; however, nowadays, it has become a necessity.*

**USING SEMICOLONS BEFORE CONJUNCTIONS**

It is common to merge two sentences containing commas into one using a conjunction (*and, or, but*) and a semicolon.

*Examples: Yesterday, it was, to our surprise, sunny; but today, as expected, it’s dull.
At the end of the day, Lee likes cake; and he likes, well, actually prefers, pies.*