

# Semi-Colon Challenge Worksheet

## What is a semi-colon for?

A semi-colon is used to connect two **independent clauses**. An independent clause is a phrase that can stand alone as a sentence. By using a semi-colon, we show that two independent clauses are **closely linked or related**.

**Jess bought a new car; she couldn't wait to take it for a spin.**

Semi-colons can also be used to **separate longer items in a list** when commas could be confusing (such as when the listed items contain commas of their own).

**The capital cities of the UK are London, England; Edinburgh, Scotland; Belfast, Northern Ireland; and Cardiff, Wales.**

## Why should I care?

Semi-colons help your writing flow and add sophistication to your work. More importantly, you get marks for using them! In both the English Language and Literature GCSEs, marks are available for using a wide range of punctuation accurately, including semi-colons.

## Activity 1

Add the missing semi-colons into the following sentences.

- a. Dan was in a filthy mood it was Monday morning and the coffee machine was out of order.
- b. The video game was ludicrously expensive nevertheless, I bought it anyway.
- c. I made some bad decisions yesterday I shouldn't have had that seventh cream egg.
- d. Zara came into school on crutches an owl had knocked her off her skateboard again.
- e. We haven't won the league since 1927 despite this, I still buy a season ticket every year.
- f. Katie's dad got up on stage and sang karaoke she was absolutely mortified.
- g. South Sudan is the newest country in the world it gained independence in 2011.
- h. Dylan didn't get past the first audition they said he had a voice like a wounded moose.
- i. On my trip to Europe, I visited Vienna, Austria Prague, Czech Republic Berlin, Germany and Copenhagen, Denmark.
- j. You'll need to pack warm clothes, drinks and snacks for the hike books, headphones and games for the flight and pyjamas, toiletries and chargers for the hotel.



## Activity 2

Match the pairs of independent clauses that could be joined by semi-colons.

Steve couldn't stop sneezing.
I found £20 in my jeans this morning
It was raining at the seaside.
Alisha fell asleep on the train.
An owl had knocked Zara off her skateboard again.
Claire was determined to eat the whole cake.
'The Merchant of Venice' is one of Shakespeare's comedies.
Mr Nicholls put his head in his hands.
Some people call the monster Frankenstein.
I need help managing my finances.

It isn't very funny though.
When she woke up, she was in Scotland.
She was glad she'd been wearing a helmet.
However, her friends told her it was impossible.
I couldn't believe my luck.
I've spent all my rent money on loot crates again.
Nevertheless, Hannah still bought an ice cream.
None of his students had used semi-colons again.
He was allergic to cats.
This is actually the name of the doctor who made him.

## Activity 3

Write five sentences of your own that accurately include semi-colons.

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

## Extension

Why is a semi-colon inappropriate in each of the following sentences?

- Marie had a great time at the cinema; prawns were her favourite food.
- I'm going to Paris next summer; which is one of my favourite places.
- My sandwich contained peanut butter; jam; and banana.



# Semi-Colon Challenge Worksheet Answers

## Activity 1

Add the missing semi-colons into the following sentences.

- Dan was in a filthy mood; it was Monday morning and the coffee machine was out of order.
- The video game was ludicrously expensive; nevertheless, I bought it anyway.
- I made some bad decisions yesterday; I shouldn't have had that seventh cream egg.
- Zara came into school on crutches; an owl had knocked her off her skateboard again.
- We haven't won the league since 1927; despite this, I still buy a season ticket every year.
- Katie's dad got up on stage and sang karaoke; she was absolutely mortified.
- South Sudan is the newest country in the world; it gained independence in 2011.
- Dylan didn't get past the first audition; they said he had a voice like a wounded moose.
- On my trip to Europe, I visited Vienna, Austria; Prague, Czech Republic; Berlin, Germany; and Copenhagen, Denmark.
- You'll need to pack warm clothes, drinks and snacks for the hike; books, headphones and games for the flight; and pyjamas, toiletries and chargers for the hotel.

## Activity 2

Match the pairs of independent clauses that could be joined by semi-colons.

Steve couldn't stop sneezing; **he was allergic to cats.**

I found £20 in my jeans this morning; **I couldn't believe my luck.**

It was raining at the seaside; **nevertheless, Hannah still bought an ice cream.**

Alisha fell asleep on the train; **when she woke up, she was in Scotland.**

An owl had knocked Zara off her skateboard again; **she was glad she'd been wearing a helmet.**

Claire was determined to eat the whole cake; **however, her friends told her it was impossible.**

'The Merchant of Venice' is one of Shakespeare's comedies; **it isn't very funny though.**

Mr Nicholls put his head in his hands; **none of his students had used semi-colons again.**

Some people call the monster Frankenstein; **this is actually the name of the doctor who made him.**

I need help managing my finances; **I've spent all my rent money on loot crates again.**

## Extension

Why is a semi-colon inappropriate in each of the following sentences?

- Marie had a great time at the cinema; prawns were her favourite food.  
**The two clauses are not linked or related so they shouldn't be joined by a semi-colon.**
- I'm going to Paris next summer; which is one of my favourite places.  
**The second clause is not an independent clause – it could not be a sentence on its own.**
- My sandwich contained peanut butter; jam; and banana.  
**The listed items could simply be divided by commas.**

