Chapter 30

Punctuation

End Marks and Commas

Punctuation is used to make the meaning of a sentence clear to the reader. Some marks of punctuation indicate in writing the pauses and stops which the voice makes in speaking. They indicate not only where a pause should come but also how long the pause should be—the comma standing for a slight hesitation, the period for a longer one. Other vocal inflections are conveyed by the question mark and the exclamation point.

A complete statement of the correct uses of all punctuation marks is provided in this chapter and the one that follows, together with exercises to help you fix these uses in your mind. Punctuating exercises is at best an artificial activity, however, and you must be very careful to carry over into your writing the punctuation principles you have learned. Since punctuation is so closely related to meaning, you probably should punctuate as you write, for while you are writing, you continually use punctuation to group certain ideas together and to separate other ideas from each other. On the other hand, many writers prefer to concentrate first on getting their ideas onto paper; then they go back over what they have written and insert whatever punctuation is necessary to make the writing clear to others and conventionally correct. This latter process, known as proofreading, is a very important part of writing. Proofread all of your writing carefully.

Do not overpunctuate. Use a mark of punctuation for only two reasons: (1) because meaning demands it, or (2) because conventional usage requires it.
END MARKS

30a. A statement is followed by a period.
EXAMPLE Summer vacation begins June 26.

30b. An abbreviation is followed by a period.¹
EXAMPLES Ave. Dec. A.D. Dr.

¹ NOTE Abbreviations in the metric system are often written without periods.

30c. A question is followed by a question mark.
(1) Distinguish between a statement containing an indirect question and a sentence which asks a question directly.
EXAMPLES She wants to know what the assignment is. [statement containing an indirect question—followed by a period]
Do you know what the assignment is? [a direct question—followed by a question mark]

(2) Polite requests in question form (frequently used in business letters) may be followed by a period; a question mark would, of course, be perfectly correct.
EXAMPLES Will you please ship this order three weeks before Christmas.
Will you please ship this order three weeks before Christmas?

(3) A question mark should be placed inside quotation marks when the quotation is a question. Otherwise, it should be placed outside the quotation marks.
EXAMPLES Hector asked, “Have you heard from Ellen?” [The quotation is a question.]

Did you say, “Meet me at eight o’clock?” [The quotation is not a question. The whole sentence, however, is a question.]

30d. An exclamation is followed by an exclamation point.
EXAMPLES What a beautiful dress!
How expensive!
You’re joking!
Congratulations!

(1) Many exclamations begin either with “What a . . .” or “How . . .” as in the first two of the preceding examples. When you begin a sentence with these words, check your end mark carefully.

(2) An interjection at the beginning of a sentence is usually followed by a comma.
CUSTOMARY Ah, there you have me!
RARE Ah! There you have me!

(3) An exclamation point should be placed inside quotation marks when the quotation is an exclamation. Otherwise, it should be placed outside the quotation marks.
EXAMPLES “What a game that was!” exclaimed Nadine as she entered the cafeteria.
How foolish of him to say in the fifth inning, “The game is won!”

30e. An imperative sentence may be followed by either a period or an exclamation point, depending upon the force intended.
EXAMPLES Please reply by return mail.
Block that kick!

EXERCISE 1. Many periods and all exclamation and question marks have been omitted from the following passage. Copy in a column on your paper all words which you think should be followed by end marks. After each word write
the end mark required. If a new sentence should begin after the end mark, write the first word of the sentence, giving it a capital letter. Before each word write the number of the line in which it appears.

EXAMPLE 1 “What an exciting picture” exclaimed my companion as we left the theater wasn’t it too bad I couldn’t agree with him the picture had been...

1. picture!
2. theater. Wasn’t
3. him? 

Janet Smith, M.D., Director of the Carla S. Lewis clinic, stopped her car behind a truck “Whew” she sighed. “What a lot of traffic” Presently the cars at her right moved forward, but not the truck ahead although in a hurry, she accepted the fact that Sixth St at this hour was an overcrowded thoroughfare, and she decided to be patient. The taxi driver behind her, however, had a different idea he honked his horn the sound startled Dr. Smith, but what could she do anyone could see the truck was blocking her way. “How stupid some drivers are” she thought. The insistent honking continued, and Dr Smith became annoyed when the truck moved on, she deliberately made a slow start and felt rewarded when the horn behind her broke into a deluge of noise.

When the light turned green at the next corner, she was about to press the accelerator when another horn, of deeper tone but just as unpleasant, broke out in the rear “All right All right” she exclaimed “Hold your horses” When after a number of similar incidents, she turned into her own drive, she was thoroughly sick of horns and ill-mannered drivers.

That evening, as Dr Smith settled down to her favorite television program, her calm was shattered again by a too familiar sound “Good heavens” she exclaimed. “Will I never have any peace” Looking across the front lawn, she saw Hal Jordan’s jalopy at the curb Hal was calling for Jimmy Smith. “Jimmy,” she shouted “come here at once” Jimmy stopped short in the second of his usual two leaps from stairway to door. “Jimmy, you tell that Hal Jordan he is never to honk that horn in front of this house again can’t be walk up to the door and ask for you” Her words were drowned by Hal’s obliging repetition of the two long...

and three short blasts Jimmy escaped, leaving his mother still talking but inaudible.

“Cut it out” she heard him yell “Do you love the sound of that horn”

When Mr Smith came in from his work, his wife gave him an account of her experience with hornblowers “I will propose to the Governor tomorrow morning” she said, “that auto horns be made inoperable when the car is not in motion wouldn’t that be a good law” Mr Smith agreed with his wife.

THE COMMA

The comma—the most frequently used mark of punctuation—is used mainly to group words that belong together and to separate those that do not. Some other uses have little to do with meaning but are simply customary ways of punctuating sentences.

Items in a Series

30 f. Use commas to separate items in a series.

EXAMPLES She was formerly on the staff of the embassies in Moscow, Berlin, Vienna, and Madrid.

There were books on the desk, posters on the wall, and clothing on the floor.

NOTE Do not place a comma before the first item or after the last item in a series.

INCORRECT During the summer the workers had installed, a new gymnasium floor, an improved heating system, and green chalkboards, in the high school building.

CORRECT During the summer the workers had installed a new gymnasium floor, an improved heating system, and green chalkboards in the high school building.

It is permissible to omit the comma before the and joining the last two items in a series if the comma is not
needed to make the meaning clear. There are some constructions in which the inclusion or omission of this comma affects the meaning of the sentence.

American folk songs may be classified in the following categories: marching songs, work songs, ballads, hymns, and spirituals. [five categories]

American folk songs may be classified in the following categories: marching songs, work songs, ballads, hymns and spirituals. [four categories]

▶ NOTE Words customarily used in pairs are set off as one item in a series: bag and baggage, pen and ink, hat and coat, pork and beans, bread and butter, etc.

For lunch they served a fruit cup, macaroni and cheese, salad, ice cream and cake, and coffee.

(1) If all items in a series are joined by and or or, do not use commas to separate them.

EXAMPLE The weather forecaster predicted rain or sleet or snow.

(2) Independent clauses in a series are usually separated by a semicolon. Short independent clauses, however, may be separated by commas.

EXAMPLE We walked, we played, we ate, and we gained weight.

30g. Use a comma to separate two or more adjectives preceding a noun.

EXAMPLES She is an alert, vivacious girl.

We patiently sat through a long, dull, amateurish performance.

(1) Do not use a comma before the final adjective in a series if the adjective is thought of as part of the noun.

INCORRECT It was a cold, raw, dark, November day.

CORRECT It was a cold, raw, dark November day. [November day is considered as one word, one item. The adjectives modify November day, not day.]

CORRECT She is a bright, charming, talented young woman. [Young woman is thought of as one word.]

(2) If one of the words in a series modifies another word in the series, do not separate them by a comma.

EXAMPLE He wore a bright blue blazer.

Comma Between Independent Clauses

30h. Use a comma before and, but, or, nor, for, yet when they join independent clauses, unless the clauses are very short.

EXAMPLES Saturday’s Council meeting was unusually harmonious, for no one raised any objections.

The first two acts were slow-moving, but the third act was full of action and suspense.

You go ahead and I’ll follow. [independent clauses too short to require punctuation]

When the conjunction joins two verbs, not two main clauses, a comma is not used.

EXAMPLES I gave some good advice to Geraldo and got some from him in return. [The conjunction joins the verbs gave and got.]

I gave some good advice to Geraldo, and he gave me some in return. [The conjunction joins two independent clauses.]

▶ NOTE You are allowed some freedom in the application of this rule. Many writers use the comma before these conjunctions—as they use the comma before and between the last two items in a series—only when necessary to keep the meaning clear.

NOT CLEAR I carved the turkey and the family watched.

CLEAR I carved the turkey, and the family watched.

NOT CLEAR I didn’t know whether or not to wait longer for the letter carrier had brought no word from you.

CLEAR I didn’t know whether or not to wait longer, for the letter carrier had brought no word from you.

As you can see from the preceding examples, a reader may easily be confused if the comma is omitted. This is especially true of
the comma before the conjunction for, which should always be preceded by a comma when it means because.

EXERCISE 2. The following sentences cover rules 30f–h. Number your paper 1–15. Copy after the proper number the words in each sentence which should be followed by a comma, placing the comma after the word. Since the meaning of some sentences may be determined by the punctuation, you should be prepared to explain the punctuation you use.
1. The police searched everywhere but there were no fingerprints to be found.
2. Mr. Feinstein asked the waiter for coffee beans and ham and eggs.
3. States included in the Japanese beetle area are New York New Jersey Maryland and Delaware.
4. I played the melody on the guitar and the electric bass provided the rhythm.
5. Everyone turned to watch the large pale yellow moon.
6. This policy covers medical expenses iron-lung rental hospitalization and transportation to a center of treatment.
7. The train pulled out and left me in a strange town without my luggage hat and coat or credentials.
8. The school administration is responsible for these disciplinary problems stem from rules made in the office.
9. This poet did not use capital letters and her punctuation was frequently unconventional.
10. The wagon train was approaching lonely wild country.
11. The wind froze us the rain soaked us and the waves tossed us.
12. We are learning more and more about space through our new and stronger telescopes our huge radar installations and our instrument-packed space probes.
13. She found that it was a friendly unsophisticated little town that she had chosen for her home.
14. Soldiers were stationed at frequent intervals along the curb and the sidewalks behind them were jammed with onlookers.
15. She is pretty tall and blonde; her sister is small and dark and beautiful.

Nonessential Elements

30i. Use commas to set off nonessential clauses and nonessential participial phrases.

A nonessential (nonrestrictive) clause is a subordinate clause that is not essential to the meaning of the sentence but merely adds an idea to the sentence.

NONESSENTIAL Joan Thomas, who was offered scholarships to three colleges, will go to Mt. Holyoke in September.

The basic meaning of this sentence is Joan Thomas will go to Mt. Holyoke in September. The subordinate clause does not affect this basic meaning; it merely adds an idea to the sentence. It is a nonessential clause because it does not limit in any way the word it modifies—Joan Thomas. Clauses which modify proper nouns are nearly always nonessential.

The opposite of a nonessential clause is an essential (restrictive) clause.

ESSENTIAL Joan Thomas is the only senior who won scholarships to three colleges.

Here the subordinate clause is essential to the sentence, for without it the sentence would mean something else: Joan Thomas is the only senior. The subordinate clause limits the meaning of senior—senior who won scholarships to three colleges.

Study the following examples of essential and nonessential clauses until you understand the terms. Note the punctuation: essential—no punctuation; nonessential—set off by commas.

ESSENTIAL The city which interests me most is Hollywood.
NONESSENTIAL Bismarck, which is the capital of North Dakota, is in the south-central part of the state.
ESSENTIAL The man who spoke to me is my science teacher.
NONESSENTIAL Mr. Orban, who is my science teacher, spoke to me.
Sometimes a clause may be interpreted as either essential or nonessential. In such instances the writer must decide which interpretation to give to the clause and punctuate it accordingly.

Dave took his problem to the librarian who is an authority on reference books. [interpreted as essential]

Dave took his problem to the librarian, who is an authority on reference books. [interpreted as nonessential]

We may assume from the first sentence, which contains an essential clause, that there is more than one librarian. Dave chose the one who is an authority on reference books.

From the second sentence we may assume that there is only one librarian and that the librarian is an authority on reference books.

My aunt who works at the Union Trust Company lives in New Jersey. [I have several aunts, and this is one of them.]

My aunt, who works at the Union Trust Company, lives in New Jersey. [I have only one aunt, no others.]

**EXERCISE 3.** Some of the sentences in this exercise contain essential clauses; others contain nonessential clauses. Number your paper 1–20. If the italicized clause is essential, write E after the proper number; if it is nonessential, write Commas to indicate that you would use commas in this sentence.

1. Friends who do favors for you may expect you to do favors for them.
2. The Welcoming Committee who made us feel at home in a strange school helped us through the first confusing days of the term.
3. Our new Buick which my parents bought in Detroit is a four-door model.
4. The Buick which Mr. Burton drives is like the one we saw on television.
5. She is wearing the sweater that she received for Christmas.
6. Her new sweater which was a Christmas gift is two sizes too large.
7. People who are nervous do not make good drivers.
8. Men who are sometimes thought to be the stronger sex cannot stand pain as well as women.
9. American cities that are outwardly very much alike may show distinctive characteristics on more intimate acquaintance.
10. Cities that have great financial problems levy a sales tax.
11. The Sault Ste. Marie Canals which connect Lake Superior and Lake Huron would be a prime target in wartime.
12. I do not like people who litter public parks.
13. These antiquated tariffs which were necessary during the depression are shutting off foreign markets from American manufacturers.
14. Many people who settled America came to escape tyranny.
15. The Hudson’s Bay Company which is one of the oldest trading firms in the world was founded in 1670.
16. Leontyne Price who is well-known for her role as Cleopatra is one of the world’s leading sopranos.
17. The book that I have read for this report is a novel about World War II.
18. On my return I found that the people that I had expected to see had moved away.
19. Lucy French who does her own gardening says she exhausts herself trying to get rid of weeds.
20. All the tickets that had been sold were recalled.

A participial phrase is a group of related words containing a participle (see page 42). Present participles end in -ing; past participles of regular verbs end in -ed or -d.

Like a nonessential clause, a nonessential participial phrase is set off by commas because it is not necessary to the meaning of the sentence.

**NONESSENTIAL** My little brother, playing in the street, was struck by a car.

**ESSENTIAL** A child playing in the street may be struck by a car.

**NONESSENTIAL** Our dog, frightened by the thunder, hid in a closet.

**ESSENTIAL** Animals frightened by thunder often try to hide.
NONESSENTIAL The crowd broke up suddenly, dispersing rapidly in all directions.

ESSENTIAL I watched the crowd dispersing rapidly in all directions.

EXERCISE 4. This exercise covers all comma rules given up to this point in the chapter. After the proper number write all words in the sentence which should be followed by a comma. Write the comma after each word. Be prepared to explain your answers.

1. Any student who wishes to join the gymnastics team will have to excel in floor exercises on the balance beam and on the uneven parallel bars.
2. The sophomores decorated the gym and the juniors provided the refreshments.
3. Anyone taking the basic photography course will learn how to shoot close-ups portraits and still lifes.
4. The judge leaving her chambers stopped to talk to some court reporters who had gathered around her.
5. We got encouragement from everyone but our parents helped us most of all.
6. Careful writers distinguish between uninterested which means "indifferent" and disinterested which means "unbiased."
7. Any student wishing to sing act or perform on Class Day should sign up before tomorrow which is the deadline.
8. Governor Quigley whose speeches are filled with clichés appeared on television last night asking people to "tighten their belts bite the bullet pull their own weight and give till it hurts."
9. A sad-looking mongrel which had followed me halfway home suddenly trotted up to me and staring at me soulfully started to lick my hand.
10. A story which appeared in yesterday's newspaper was about the Toronto Maple Leafs which is my favorite hockey team.

**Introductory Elements**

**30j. Use a comma after certain introductory elements.**

- (1) Use a comma after words such as well, yes, no, and why when they begin a sentence.
  
  **EXAMPLES**
  
  **Yes,** you were elected.
  
  **Oh,** I wouldn’t be too sure about that.
  
  **Why,** the entire argument is false!

- (2) Use a comma after an introductory participial phrase.

  **EXAMPLE**
  
  Behaving like a spoiled child, he pouted and sulked.

  **NOTE**
  
  Do not confuse a gerund ending in -ing and used as the subject of the sentence with an introductory participial phrase.

  **EXAMPLES**
  
  **Washing and polishing the car is fun.** [gerunds used as subjects—not followed by a comma]
  
  **Washing and polishing the car, I developed sore muscles.** [introductory participial phrase—followed by a comma]

- (3) Use a comma after a succession of introductory prepositional phrases.

  **EXAMPLE**
  
  At the edge of the deep woods near Lakeville in Cumberland County, they built a small log cabin.

  **NOTE**
  
  A single introductory prepositional phrase need not be followed by a comma unless it is parenthetical (by the way, on the contrary, etc.) or the comma is necessary to prevent confusion.

  **EXAMPLES**
  
  **By the way, I had a letter from Edith Yen.**
  
  **With the weak, competition is unpopular.**
  
  **In the morning I am never wide awake.**

- (4) Use a comma after an introductory adverb clause.

  **EXAMPLE**
  
  While Mario put the costume on, the accompanist played "Deep Purple."

  An adverbial clause at the end of a sentence is not usually set off:

  The accompanist played "Deep Purple" while Mario put the costume on.
EXERCISE 5. This exercise covers all comma rules to this point in the chapter. Number your paper 1–10. Copy after the proper number the words in each sentence which should be followed by a comma, placing a comma after each word.

1. One look at the assignment is not enough, for most students will need to study it carefully.
2. When we had finished playing the piano was rolled offstage to make room for the next act.
3. On the afternoon of the first day of school the halls were still filled with lost confused or frightened freshmen.
4. Well if you need help please don’t hesitate to ask me or Mrs. Seil or Mrs. Faust.
5. In the second half of the third period Johnson evaded the defense caught a twenty-yard pass and raced into the end zone.
6. Speaking in assembly yesterday Katy Stover urged students to obey the new rules governing conduct in the cafeteria, the school corridors, and the parking lot.
7. Having studied the tax proposals of both political parties Governor Ross, who was not satisfied rejected both proposals and then presented a new plan.
8. Marchers in the long orderly picket line appeared to have the support of everyone in the crowd but the police carrying out their orders broke up the demonstration.
9. Legitimate theaters are prospering in many American cities but the New York stage is still the goal of young actors, dancers, and musicians.
10. When Bill was driving our truck lurching unexplainably and we wondered whether he was falling asleep at the wheel.

Interrupters

30k. Use commas to set off expressions that interrupt the sentence.

To set off an expression takes two commas unless the expression comes first or last in the sentence.

(1) Appositives and appositive phrases are usually set off by commas.

An appositive is a word—with or without modifiers—that follows a noun or pronoun and identifies or explains it. An appositive phrase consists of an appositive and its modifiers.

EXAMPLE A syndicated column by Bernice Silverman, the noted writer, will appear in the Times-News, a local paper.

When an appositive is so closely related to the word it modifies that it appears to be part of that word, no comma is necessary. An appositive of this kind is called a restrictive appositive. Usually it is one word.

EXAMPLES Her cousin Raquel
The novel Windswept
Your friend Jean
Catherine the Great
The conjunction and

(2) Words used in direct address are set off by commas.

EXAMPLES I don’t know, Alice, where your brother is.
Sam, please come here.
Your grades are disappointing, my friend.

(3) Parenthetical expressions are set off by commas.

The following expressions are commonly used parenthetically: I believe (think, know, hope, etc.), I am sure, on the contrary, on the other hand, after all, by the way, incidentally, in fact, indeed, naturally, of course, in my opinion, for example, however, nevertheless, to tell the truth.

EXAMPLES My parents will, I am sure, let me have the car tonight.
The weight of the car, of course, determines the price of the license.
On the contrary, jogging is relaxing.
Jenkins was doing things the hard way, naturally.

Knowledge of the above rule and of the expressions commonly used parenthetically is helpful in punctuating, but you should understand that your intention is what de-
6. Our plan I knew would have to succeed for there would be no second chance.
7. The nineteenth-century book *El Jibaro* which was written by Manuel A. Alonso is by the way considered the first Puerto Rican classic.
8. Imprisoned without warning or explanation the two reporters were held, if I remember correctly for two months in spite of efforts by England France and the United States to effect their release.
9. If you are prompt in getting your order in, our office will guarantee delivery before Christmas, which is only ten days off.
10. You should understand my good friend, that much as I should like to do so I cannot give money to every organization that thinks it needs help.
11. Passengers riding in the front of the wrecked bus were the ones who were most severely injured.
12. This school composed largely of students from farm homes must offer courses in agriculture the occupation that most of the students will enter.
13. Looking for a sports car at a bargain price Henry who is car-crazy spent the day hanging around the North Country Motor Company which buys sells and services all makes of foreign cars.
14. Lauren and Jim left alone in the house immediately raided the refrigerator which was full of tasty items for the party that Kay's mother was giving the next day.
15. Napoleon's brothers Joseph and Lucien tried to prevent him from selling Louisiana but Richard Livingston and James Monroe the American representatives succeeded in making the purchase.
16. Well having tried all morning to reach me the girls delivered the message and I gave them a written reply which I hoped would be satisfactory.
17. In spite of their parents' warning Amy and Joan who should have known better stayed up reading the night before the test and didn't get to sleep they admitted until two o'clock.
18. Taking an afternoon stroll in the park my little sister Sally befriended a retriever a spaniel and a mutt that followed her home.
19. Before you start taking anything apart Maria I hope you
will be sure that you can if necessary put it together again.
20. When Jimmie had finished the cake and pie were all gone and
left untouched were the steak potatoes and salad.

Conventional Uses

30I. Use a comma in certain conventional situations.

(1) Use a comma to separate items in dates and addresses.

EXAMPLES Our sentimental idea was to hold a class reunion on
June 20, 1980, at the old high school.
Address me at 222 Twin Oaks Road, Akron, Ohio,  
after the first of March.
Their baby was born on Monday, May 3, 1976, in 
Baltimore, Maryland.

► NOTE When only the month and day are given, no punctuation is necessary.
It was on May 10 that we began work.
When the items are joined by a preposition, do not use commas.
She lived at 331 Main Street in Passaic, New Jersey.

(2) Use a comma after the salutation of a friendly letter and
after the closing of any letter.

EXAMPLES Dear Rhonda, Sincerely yours,

(3) Use a comma after a name followed by Jr., Sr., Ph.D., etc.

EXAMPLES Frank Lehman, Jr. Hazel Sellers, Ph.D.

Unnecessary Commas

30m. Do not use unnecessary commas.
Commas are not to be sprinkled about in a composition as
if they were salt, merely to add flavor. The tendency of
modern writers is to use commas sparingly. You should be
able to show either that the commas you use help the reader
to understand what you have written or that they are re-
quired by custom—as in a date or address, for example.
Using commas just for the fun of it is bad as not using
them when they are necessary. Your teacher will surely
question your competence if you use them when they can-
not be justified.

REVIEW EXERCISE. This exercise covers end marks and
all comma uses. Copy the sentences, inserting punctuation
and capitalization where necessary.

1. Trapped on a sand bar by the incoming tide the amateur clam
diggers Pete and Don who could not swim had to be rescued.

2. In the first semester the following courses in homemaking
will be offered: cooking sewing interior decoration baby care
and feeding.

3. Our house at 2125 Northern Boulevard Flushing New York
was sold and we moved to 433 West Thirty-fourth Street
New York City.

4. John Carr Jr the only Eagle Scout in the troop organized
the parade selected the flag-bearers hired the band and gen-
erally substituted for the troop leader.

5. In 1935 putting the Herald Tribune on microfilm was begun
and we now have on microfilm copies of every issue of the
Tribune from April 19 1841 up to its last issue.

6. When Josie who was driving tried to show off her friend
Lucille fearing an accident threatened never to ride with her
again.

7. In a gesture of good will Laura who owns a car missed the
dance on Friday and drove to see Jan her girlfriend who had
been hospitalized with pneumonia.

8. When the general called Stackpole a major in the RAF and
an official of the British government were standing at the table
watching an experiment.

9. Some of the workers were eating some were clearing away
debris and the sheriff was conferring with the troopers who
had just arrived to assist in the cleanup.

10. Our company which has a branch in your area will gladly
submit designs for a ranch-type split-level or colonial house.

11. Maria had moved to Tampa Florida on November 19 1975
and in 1976 she moved again to Columbia Ohio.
Chapter 31

Punctuation

Other Marks of Punctuation

Although the marks of punctuation treated in this chapter are used less frequently than the period and comma, they are often important. Just as you have learned to follow certain conventions in grammar and usage and spelling, you should observe the conventional uses of the punctuation marks described in this chapter.

THE SEMICOLON

31a. Use a semicolon between independent clauses not joined by and, but, or, nor, for, yet.

EXAMPLES

Representatives of 130 nations attended the spring meeting of the General Assembly; they remained in session from April 5 to May 18.

Take with you only indispensable things; leave behind all heavy and bulky items.

A writer must have some basis for deciding whether to use two independent clauses with a semicolon between them, or two sentences with a period (and capital letter). In most writing, the division into sentences is preferable. A semicolon is used only when the ideas in the two clauses are so closely related that a period would make too distinct a break between them.

31b. Use a semicolon between independent clauses joined by such words as for example, for instance,