

# Lesson 3

Semi-colons for clauses

# Fast Five

Place full stops in the right places:

Mo Farah was born in Somalia in Africa He spent the early years of his childhood in Djibouti with his twin brother before moving to Britain to join his father at the age of eight His father, Mukhtar Farah, is an IT consultant and a British citizen who was born in London and grew up in Hounslow Mo's parents met each other whilst they were on holiday Mo attended Isleworth and Syon School and Feltham Community College His ambition was to become a car mechanic or play as a right winger for Arsenal Later on, he joined the Borough of Hounslow Athletics Club in west London

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# When do we use a semi-colon?

- The semi-colon is often used to join together two connected clauses and can be used instead of a conjunction or full stop. It allows a smooth connection between them.
- For example:
- Steven drives a Mercedes; Hannah drives a Fiat.

- Semi-colons are used to link sentences that are closely related.

**For example:**

The wood was silent and absolutely still; Little Red Riding Hood realised that she had not truly seen its beauty until now.

- A semi-colon works here to allow a smooth transition between sentences.
- A full stop between the sentences might detract from the impact of Little Red Riding Hood's observation and create too great a 'stop'. Using a comma here would be incorrect; a comma cannot be used to link two independent sentences.

Semi-colons can also be used to link one sentence to another closely related sentence that uses a **conjunctive adverb**.

**For example:**

The wolf liked Little Red Riding Hood. Nevertheless, he was looking forward to eating her.

The wolf liked Little Red Riding Hood; nevertheless, he was looking forward to eating her.

Little Red Riding Hood didn't like the forest much. However, she did like visiting Grandma.

Little Red Riding Hood didn't like the forest much; however, she did like visiting Grandma.

# Other examples of conjunctive adverbs which could be preceded by a semi-colon:

- otherwise
- therefore
- moreover
- nevertheless
- thus
- besides
- accordingly
- consequently
- instead
- hence

However, you do not *always* have to use a conjunctive adverb after a semi-colon. Here are some great examples of sentences which contain a semi-colon that is **not** followed by a conjunctive adverb:

Grandad is going bald; his hair gets thinner each time we see him.

We dropped too many catches; we lost the game.

Shaun wanted to call our new puppy Fido; I hated the name.

I am so sorry; will you ever be able to forgive me?



# Where would the semi-colons go in these sentences?

- The cat had been sadly neglected it was in an awful state.
- Steve opened the desk drawer it was empty.
- The wedding invitations have all been sent out one hundred guests are expected.
- David was very clever and worked hard he deserved to pass all his exams.
- Anna's birthday is in October Sarah's is in July.
- Aaron had a navy striped coat and Barry had a plain black one.

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