**The Semicolon**

**Recognize a semicolon when you find one.**

The semicolon ( ; ) is a powerful mark of punctuation with three uses.

The first appropriate use of the semicolon is to connect two related main clauses (complete sentences).

Follow this pattern:

```
Main Clause + ; + Main Clause .
```

Here is an example:

Grandma still rides her Harley motorcycle; her toy poodle balances in a basket between the handlebars.

A semicolon can also team up with a transition—often a conjunctive adverb—to connect two sentences close in meaning.

Here is the pattern:

```
Main Clause + ; + Transition + , + Main Clause .
```

Check out this example:

My father does not approve of his mother cruising around town on a Harley motorcycle; however, Grandma has never cared what anyone thinks.

Finally, use the semicolon to avoid confusion when you have complicated lists of items.

Here is the pattern:

```
Item + , + More Information + ; + Item + , + More Information + ; + and + Item + , + More Information
```
Read the following example:

On a Harley motorcycle, my grandmother and her poodle have traveled to Anchorage, Alaska; San Francisco, California; and Tijuana, Mexico.

Keep these three things in mind when you use a semicolon:

• The two main clauses that the semicolon joins should be closely related in meaning.
• Do not capitalize the word that follows the semicolon unless that word is a proper noun, one that is always capitalized.
• Limit your use of semicolons; you should not scatter them haphazardly throughout your writing. Semicolons are like glasses of champagne; save them for special occasions.