



The Language Support Hub

How to use semicolons (;)

Use a **semicolon (;)**

1. To group and then sort out a elements list:

Example: We had four professors on our committee: Peter Diaz, Professor of Mathematics; Ronald Pepin, Professor of English; Cynthia Greenblatt, Professor of Education; and Mohammed Al-Beit, Professor of Nursing.

[The (;) is separating an element that has two components: 1. Ronald Pepin, 2. Professor of English]

2. To separate closely related independent clauses.

Example: My grandmother seldom goes to bed this early; she's afraid she'll miss out on something.

[See how there are two 'long' elements, so we cannot use a comma. The semicolon allows the writer to imply a relationship between nicely balanced ideas without actually stating that relationship.]