

# A Concise Guide to Semi-Colons

## Use semi-colons in two ways...

### 1. To separate long items in a list, especially when the items themselves contain commas:

- There are three ways in which he is irrational: first, he will not agree with me; second, he refuses to admit how brilliant I am; and third, he persists in his own way of thinking.
- The cities that are in the running to host the Olympics are Cleveland, Ohio; Phoenix, Arizona; and Seattle, Washington.

### 2. To join two complete sentences together when they are related in meaning:

- I am a Republican; he is a Democrat.
- Dogs are like sponges; they soak up the personalities of their owners.

### Often, a transition word and a comma will introduce the second clause:

- I have tried to convince him of my views; **however**, he is very stubborn.
- A dog is “man’s best friend”; **moreover**, a dog can help you live longer.

### Here are some common transition words to use after a semi-colon, always followed by a comma:

- |                |                    |                     |
|----------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| • Also         | • Next             | • In addition       |
| • Anyway       | • Otherwise        | • In comparison     |
| • Besides      | • Similarly        | • In contrast       |
| • Consequently | • Still            | • In fact           |
| • Finally      | • Then             | • In other words    |
| • Furthermore  | • Therefore        | • On the contrary   |
| • However      | • Thus             | • On the other hand |
| • Incidentally | • After all        | • That is           |
| • Indeed       | • As a result      |                     |
| • Instead      | • At any rate      |                     |
| • Likewise     | • At the same time |                     |
| • Meanwhile    | • By the way       |                     |
| • Moreover     | • Even so          |                     |
| • Nevertheless | • For example      |                     |