

Grammar: Clauses and Semicolons (part 1)

A clause is a group of words containing a subject and a predicate. Complete sentences are composed of one or more clauses.

An *independent clause* is a clause that can stand on its own as a sentence.

Example: "John likes cheese," "I went to Georgia."

A *dependent clause* is a clause that cannot stand on its own as a sentence.

Example: "When spring arrives," "because I liked it"

Dependent clauses require some connection to an independent clause to form a complete sentence. This is often done with the use of a conjunction (such as "and") or a comma.

Example: "*The dog walked up to the tree when the sun rose.*"

(Independent)

(dependent)

A *semicolon* is a punctuation mark that can add clarity and variety to your writing. Semicolons combine **two independent clauses** without the use of a conjunction. Here's an example:

"I love deadlines; I love the whooshing noise they make as they go by." (Douglas Adams)

Do not use a comma to combine two independent clauses - it is grammatically incorrect! Instead, use a semicolon.

Follow Up Work:

Option A:

Select any (school-appropriate) song of your choice. Print out the lyrics. Mark which clauses are independent clauses, and which clauses are dependant clauses. If possible, mark one spot where a semicolon could be used.

Option B:

Write a creative passage that is one paragraph long. Include at least one semicolon, and demonstrate use of both independent and dependent clauses.

Option C:

Using the flashcards provided, write 5 independent clauses and 5 dependent clauses (one on each card). Relate two of your independent clauses so that they may be combined with a semicolon.

