

Using Semicolons

Indiana Standards 2000 9.6.1

A semicolon looks like this: ; It is part colon (:) and part comma.

A semicolon has many purposes; one of the most common is joining independent clauses without a conjunction. N. Scott Momaday uses them in *The Way to Rainy Mountain*.

It was not like any bird that you have seen; it was very beautiful, and it did not fly away. (p.18)

The woman looked all around; she saw that he was the only living man there. (p. 18)

It was evening; the sun came home and found his woman gone. (p. 20)

When the ideas of two clauses are closely related, a writer can join the clauses with a semicolon instead of using a conjunction. This helps the reader see the connection; it also helps the ideas flow more smoothly.

Practice

Write five sentences. Each one should contain a word from this list and a semicolon.

abundant

enclosure

mass

ominous

spectacle

corridor

magnificent

multitude

proclaim

venture
