



Rule 1: To **separate an independent clause (complete thought) from a dependent clause (incomplete thought)**; dependent can be removed without changing the sentence meaning

- Ex: Before Bruce jumped in his car, he made sure to grab his car keys.

Rule 2: To **separate out a dependent clause within an independent clause** (works the same way as parenthesis)

- Ex: Bruce, a father in his 40s, took his old Cadillac for a spin.

Rule 3: To **separate two independent clauses** with the use of FANBOYS (for, and, nor, but, or yet, so). A comma and FANBOY works the same way as a period.

- Ex. Bruce jumped into his old Cadillac, but he forgot that it was low on gas.



Commas Examples

Mitochondria, the organelles responsible for converting sugars into usable cellular energy, play a central role in metabolism by producing _____ that cells use to fuel chemical reactions.

- A. ATP
- B. ATP and
- C. ATP,
- D. ATP—

_____ monitored the nesting habits of thirty bald eagle pairs in the Pacific Northwest over a five-year period and discovered that when nearby forests were logged, the eagles built fewer nests.

- A. Wildlife biologist James Lowell:
- B. Wildlife biologist, James Lowell,
- C. Wildlife biologist James Lowell
- D. Wildlife biologist James Lowell,



Commas Examples

Marie Curie was a pioneering physicist and chemist who conducted groundbreaking research on radioactivity. She won the Nobel Prize in Physics in _____ she later won the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1911 for her discovery of radium and polonium.

- A. 1903
- B. 1903 and
- C. 1903,
- D. 1903, and

Leonardo da Vinci's sketches of flying machines reveal his deep interest in human flight and the mechanics of birds' wings. The designs, according to _____ illustrate his combination of artistic skill and scientific observation.

- A. da Vinci
- B. da Vinci,
- C. da Vinci:
- D. da Vinci—



Semicolons

First Rule (Easy and Obvious):

Separate out 2 independent clauses. Work exactly the same way as a period except the next word stays lowercase. (Works interchangeably with comma + FANBOYS)

- Ex: Bruce jumped in his old Cadillac; however, he forgot that it was low on gas.

Second Rule (More Difficult/Less Common):

To separate items in a list, where each item has a comma inside it. Normally, commas separate items in a list, but in this case, that would create confusion.

Wrong: Bryce visited Cannon Beach, Oregon, Westport, Washington, and Juneau, Alaska

Correct: Bryce visited Cannon Beach, Oregon(;)Westport, Washington(;)and Juneau, Alaska

Easiest Way to Identify if it's the 2nd Rule → ; and ← (this isn't possible for the 1st rule)



Semicolons Example 1

Economic theories often evolve over time, in which older models are refined or replaced by more accurate _____ the recent resurgence of interest in behavioral economics (driven by research on cognitive biases) shows that previously sidelined ideas can regain relevance in modern contexts.

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- A. models, even so;
- B. models even so,
- C. models; even so,
- D. models, even so,



Semicolons Example 2

Japanese filmmaker Hayao Miyazaki's celebrated works include My Neighbor Totoro, a film about childhood wonder and imagination _____ a story exploring humanity's relationship with nature; and The Wind Rises, his historical drama about aviation.

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- A) imagination, Princess Mononoke,
- B) imagination; Princess Mononoke,
- C) imagination: Princess Mononoke,
- D) imagination; Princess Mononoke



Colons: Provide **extra information after a independent clause**, works as the **lead-in**

- Replaces a transition word (because, including, such as, etc..) and cannot be used around FANBOYS
- Can work for explanations, elaborations, lists, etc.
 - Ex 1: Bruce had to bring three things before he left the house: his wallet, his keys, and his jacket.
 - Ex 2: Bruce only thought about one thing: his old Cadillac.
 - Ex 3: Bruce wanted to drive his old Cadillac: it brought back many good memories.



Colons Example 1

The research team focused on three main environmental factors that affect coral reef health in the _____ water temperature, ocean acidity, and nutrient levels.

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- A) Caribbean:
- B) Caribbean;
- C) Caribbean,
- D) Caribbean—





Colons Example 2

How do marine biologists study the diets of deep-sea creatures that are rarely observed in their natural habitats? Previously, researchers relied on examining stomach contents from captured specimens, but in 2023 a team led by Dr. Elena Moreno tried something _____ the DNA extracted from environmental water samples.

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- A. innovative: analyzing
- B. innovative; analyzing
- C. innovative, analyzing:
- D. innovative. Analyzing



Dashes

Double Dashes: Work exactly the same as double commas and parenthesis.

- Ex: Bruce - a father in his 40s - took his old Cadillac for a spin.

Single Dashes: Provide extra information after an independent clause

- **Can work in 2 ways:**
 - Create a **dramatic pause/tone shift**
 - Ex: Bruce was walking toward his old Cadillac - he had not seen it in over 15 years!
 - **Replace because** (just like a colon)
 - Ex: Bruce wanted to drive his old Cadillac - it brought back many good memories.



Dashes Example 1

At ten articles long, the bill of rights of _____ European country—is much more detailed than the ten amendments that make up the United States Bill of Rights.

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- A) Germany—a
- B) Germany, a
- C) Germany a
- D) Germany: a



Dashes Example 2

After recovering from a serious childhood illness, Michael Phelps faced doubts about whether he could compete at an elite level. Overcoming those doubts, Phelps didn't just compete, he _____ the 2008 Beijing Olympics, he won eight gold medals, setting multiple world records and cementing his place in swimming history.

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- A) swam—relentlessly—during
- B) swam—relentlessly during
- C) swam—relentlessly, during
- D) swam—relentlessly. During



Possession

Apostrophes: create possession

- determine if **one word possesses another word**
- determine if the word is **singular or plural**
 - a. singular (The student's cellphone)
 - b. plural (The students' cellphones)
- some words are plural but don't end in with S (the children's playground)

Possessive Words: Whose, their, his, her, my, etc..

- The river, whose water runs through the mountains, contains many fish.
VS.
- The river's water runs through the mountains and contains many fish.



Possession Example 1

Engineer Maria Alvarez developed an improved version of the collapsible tent by wrapping fabric tightly around a thin metal rod and, using string, securing the fabric along the _____. When the string and rod were removed, the resulting folds allowed the tent to collapse compactly for storage.

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- A) rod's length.
- B) rods' length.
- C) rod's lengths.
- D) rods lengths'.



Possession Example 2

The chef carefully measured each of the recipe's ingredients before adding them to the mixing bowl, ensuring that the dish maintained the authentic flavor of the cuisine's traditional preparation _____.

Which choice completes the text so that it conforms to the conventions of Standard English?

- A) before its final garnish was added
- B) before it's final garnish was added
- C) before the recipe's final garnish was added
- D) before recipes' final garnish was added