

Check out that semi-colon!

A semi-colon is mechanical device that tends to be mis-used in writing.

The four uses of the semi-colon:

1. To join two independent clauses

“I did not call myself a poet; I told people I wrote poems.”

- Terry McMillan

2. With conjunctive adverbs

“I am faced with imminent demise; therefore, life becomes a very precious thing.”

- Amy Taylor

3. To set off independent clauses

We waited all day in that wide line, tired travelers pressing in from all side; and when we needed drinks or sandwiches, I would squeeze my way to the cafeteria and back.

4. To separate groups that contain commas

Every Saturday night my brother gathers up his things – goggles, shower cap, and snorkel; bubble bath, soap, and shampoo; tapes, stereo, and rubber duck – and heads for the tub.

A good rule of thumb:

Most likely than not, the semi-colon is combining two sentences;
sometimes semi-colons just take over.