

## Editorial Graphics and Publishing Services

### The Semicolon Revisited

The semicolon has two primary uses: to connect two independent clauses and to separate long, unwieldy lists.

#### Bringing Independent Clauses Together

Whenever the following conjunctive adverbs (connecting or transitional words) connect independent clauses, they should always be preceded by a semicolon and followed by a comma.

However, therefore, indeed, accordingly, thus, hence or besides.

*Examples:*

Ms. Lyttle had no problem giving her opinion; indeed, she spoke for an hour.

John was late for the meeting; however, he was well prepared.

#### Separating Unwieldy Lists

The semicolon is also used to separate items in lists, especially those that contain items that have their own internal comma.

*Examples:*

Conference attendees came from Little Rock, Arkansas; Roanoke, Virginia; New Haven, Connecticut; and Providence, Rhode Island.

The lawyer painted a picture of her client as a volunteer at a senior center, animal shelter, and library; a graduate of the local community college; and a devoted father who helped his son with homework every evening.