

Semicolons

*The semicolon (;) separates equal and balanced elements; it basically functions like a period (.), separating two complete sentences (two independent clauses).

Use a semicolon between main clauses NOT joined by *and*, *but*, or another coordinating conjunction.

The op-amp draws power from a dual power supply; current consumption of the op-amp is minimal.

Use a semicolon between main clauses related by *conjunctive adverbs* or *transitional expressions* such as *however* and *for example*.

Bipolar junction transistors may be used in many amplifier configuration; however, the common emitter configuration is the most widely used.

Bandpass filters are used in many common analog electronic devices; for example, every analog radio receiver contains a tunable bandpass filter.

Use semicolons between main clauses or a series of items containing commas.

*Normally, commas separate main clauses linked by coordinating conjunctions (and, but, or) and items in a series; however, when the clauses or series items contain commas, a semicolon between them makes the sentence easier to read.

The fundamental modules of a radio transmitter include the pre-amplifier, which amplifies the message signal; the local oscillator, which generates a carrier frequency; the modulator, which modulates the carrier frequency with the message signal; the power amplifier; and the load, which may be an antenna, a speaker, or a transmission cable.

Do NOT use a semicolon in the following situations:

Between a main clause and a subordinate clause or phrase:

NO: According to standard design practice; grounding capacitors should be used to stabilize all power supply outputs.

YES: According to standard design practice, grounding capacitors should be used to stabilize all power supply outputs.

Before a series or explanation:

NO: Many elements make up a circuit; resistors, capacitors, inductors, op-amps.

YES: Many elements make up a circuit: resistors, capacitors, inductors, op-amps.