**SEMICOLONS, COLONS & DASHES**

**Semicolons** are used for only two purposes:

1. **To join two complete and related sentences**
   
   *My mom is fanatical about Ohio State; our house is painted scarlet and gray.*

2. **To join items in a list to avoid confusion when one or more of the items uses a comma**
   
   *Our company has locations in Columbus, Ohio; Indianapolis, Indiana; Atlanta, Georgia; and Norwalk, Connecticut.*

**Colons** are used to introduce more specific information within a sentence. This commonly happens in three ways:

1. **Introducing a series**
   
   *For lunch today, you may choose three of the following items: chicken salad sandwich, yogurt, fruit cup, Caesar salad, or chocolate pudding.*

2. **Introducing a formal quotation**
   
   *During the Renaissance, the English mistrusted Italian influence so much that they had a proverb about it: “An Italianate Englishman is the devil incarnate.”*

3. **Introducing a word or phrase that clarifies or complements what comes before the colon**
   
   *Every day for my entire first-grade year I watched the same movie: Walt Disney’s *Sleeping Beauty.*
   
   *I had accomplished something that made me very proud: I had completed my college career without ever missing a single Buckeye football game.*

   *A colon should be preceded by a complete sentence.*

**Dashes** indicate a sharp break in the continuity of the sentence. When you are typing dashes, type them using two hyphens with no spaces before, between, or after:

*Stay away from there—you could hurt yourself!*

Microsoft Word automatically converts the two hyphens (--) to a dash (—) after you type the next word.

Use dashes in the following situations:

1. **Setting off information that interrupts the sentence’s train of thought**
   
   *The Daily Show—first hosted by Craig Kilborn from 1996-98—rose to new prominence with its “Indecision 2000” coverage of the 2000 presidential election.*

2. **Following an introductory phrase or series of ideas**
   
   *Soft, luxurious, and cozily warm—our cashmere sweaters wrap you in elegance.
   
   *I couldn’t believe it—the sample sentences were so cheesy!*