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· 2 weeks ago

According to research by Cheryl Deep of the Wayne State Institute of Gerontology, making small changes to your daily habits will help you to maintain strong mental function. For example, using your nondominant hand to brush your teeth will force your brain to exercise as it adapts to a new pattern. But you can make changes to more than just your hygiene routine. Break your writing rituals by using semicolons! Here are three ways you can incorporate semicolons into your next text.

1You can use semicolons to connect two closely related independent clauses.

Do not capitalize the first word of the second independent clause unless it is a proper noun.

Before:

Some people drink water with dinner. Other people drink wine during meals.

After:

Some people drink water with dinner; others drink wine during meals.

2Semicolons help to eliminate confusion between items in a list.

If you need to list items with long names or that contain punctuation, things can get messy. Semicolons help.

On its inaugural voyage, the cruise ship traveled to Boston, Massachusetts; Portland, Maine; and the port of Bar Harbor, Maine.

3 Once you have mastered the basics of semicolons, challenge yourself with more complicated structures.

Semicolons can be used with independent clauses joined by a conjunction if the clauses are complex or internally punctuated.

When Becky goes to college, and she will soon, I'll throw a farewell party; and that will be the first party she's ever been given.

One game, Semicolon Wars, challenges players to liberate Punctuation Island from opposition. We recommend using grammar games or quizzes like this one for practice. The more you work at it, the more you will challenge your brain, and the more you will learn!

How did you learn to use semicolons? What tips would you add?

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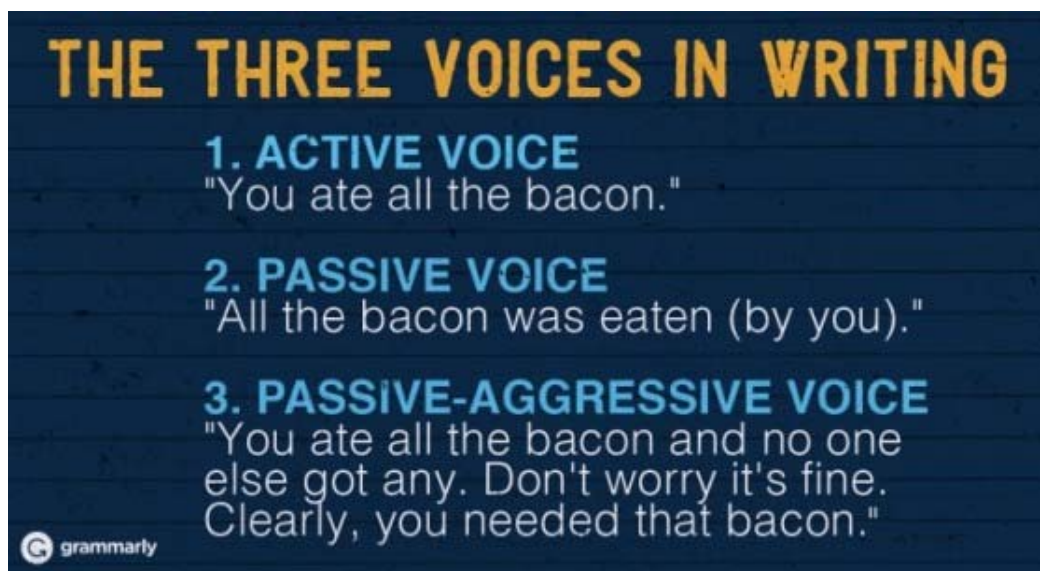
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