10.5 Semicolons: 10-minute Pack

about 10 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions.

A Night of Stargazing

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Year 6 gathered on the school field just after sunset; the sky was already turning a deep, inky blue. Mr Adeyemi had promised the class an evening they would never forget, and nobody wanted to miss a single minute of it. The playground grew quiet as everyone found a space on the grass; small groups whispered excitedly about what they might see. Three items were essential for the night ahead: a torch, for finding the way across the dark field; a warm blanket, for sitting comfortably on the grass; and a flask of hot chocolate, for keeping everyone's hands warm. Zara had never looked through a telescope before; she fumbled with the tripod until Mr Adeyemi showed her how the eyepiece worked. Within minutes, the class had found Jupiter through the lens; its four largest moons appeared as tiny points of light beside the planet. Someone spotted a satellite drifting silently across the sky; within seconds, three other pairs of eyes were tracking it too. Dan wanted to see a shooting star more than anything else; he stared upwards until his neck began to ache. Just before nine o'clock, a bright streak flashed across the sky, and the whole field erupted into cheers. Nobody complained about the cold walk back to the minibus; it had been the best science lesson of the year.

1 A semicolon can join two independent (main) clauses that are closely related in meaning, without using a conjunction such as 'and' or 'but'. Tick the sentence in each set that uses the semicolon correctly.

(a) Which sentence is correct? **(1)**

- ☐ A) The rain stopped, everyone ran outside to play.
- ☐ B) The rain stopped; everyone ran outside to play.
- ☐ C) The rain stopped and, everyone ran outside to play.

(b) Which sentence is correct? **(1)**

- ☐ A) Leo scored the winning goal, the whole team cheered.
- ☐ B) Leo scored the winning goal; and the whole team cheered.
- ☐ C) Leo scored the winning goal; the whole team cheered.

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(c) Which sentence is correct? **(1)**

- ☐ A) The museum was busy; it was a bank holiday for most visitors.
- ☐ B) The museum was busy; because it was a bank holiday.
- ☐ C) The museum was busy, it was a bank holiday.

(d) Which sentence is correct? **(1)**

- ☐ A) The battery died; so the torch stopped working.
- ☐ B) The battery died, the torch stopped working.
- ☐ C) The battery died; the torch stopped working.

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2 Six sentences are shown in the box below. Some join two independent clauses correctly with a semicolon; some are comma splices, where two independent clauses are wrongly joined with just a comma. Sort each sentence into the correct column of the table.

Word bank: The gate was locked; nobody could get into the yard. | It started to snow, the children cheered loudly. | Maya finished her homework early; she went straight outside to play. | The kettle boiled, steam filled the kitchen. | The team trained all week; they were ready for Saturday's match. | The clock struck midnight, everyone fell silent.

Correct use of a semicolon	Comma splice error

(6)

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3 The paragraph below contains three comma splices, where two independent clauses are wrongly joined with just a comma. Find and correct the three errors by replacing each comma with a semicolon.

Mr Adeyemi handed out the telescopes, everyone rushed to find a good spot. Zara focused hers on the moon, tiny craters appeared along its edge. Dan waited for a shooting star, his patience was finally rewarded just before nine o'clock.

(3)

4 The sentence below wrongly uses a semicolon before a clause that cannot stand alone on its own. Rewrite the sentence correctly, removing the semicolon, then explain in one sentence why a semicolon was not appropriate here.

The children put on their coats; because it was raining.

(2)

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Mark scheme · 10.5 Semicolons: 10-minute Pack

Question 1

(a) B ticked cao **B1**

(a) Answer: **B) The rain stopped; everyone ran outside to play.**

(b) C ticked cao **B1**

(b) Answer: **C) Leo scored the winning goal; the whole team cheered.**

(c) A ticked cao **B1**

(c) Answer: **A) The museum was busy; it was a bank holiday for most visitors.**

(d) C ticked cao **B1**

(d) Answer: **C) The battery died; the torch stopped working.**

Question 2

The gate was locked; nobody could get into the yard. sorted as Correct use of a semicolon cao **B1**

Maya finished her homework early; she went straight outside to play. sorted as Correct use of a semicolon cao **B1**

The team trained all week; they were ready for Saturday's match. sorted as Correct use of a semicolon cao **B1**

It started to snow, the children cheered loudly. sorted as Comma splice error cao **B1**

The kettle boiled, steam filled the kitchen. sorted as Comma splice error cao **B1**

The clock struck midnight, everyone fell silent. sorted as Comma splice error cao **B1**

Answer:

Correct use of a semicolon	Comma splice error
The gate was locked; nobody could get into the yard.	It started to snow, the children cheered loudly.
Maya finished her homework early; she went straight outside to play.	The kettle boiled, steam filled the kitchen.
The team trained all week; they were ready for Saturday's match.	The clock struck midnight, everyone fell silent.

Question 3

comma after telescopes replaced with a semicolon cao **B1**

comma after moon replaced with a semicolon cao **B1**

comma after star replaced with a semicolon cao **B1**

Answer: **Mr Adeyemi handed out the telescopes; everyone rushed to find a good spot. Zara focused hers on the moon; tiny craters appeared along its edge. Dan waited for a shooting star; his patience was finally rewarded just before nine o'clock.**

Question 4

semicolon removed, giving The children put on their coats because it was raining. cao **B1**

valid explanation given, e.g. 'because it was raining' cannot stand alone as its own sentence, so it is not an independent clause and a semicolon cannot be used before it (oe) **B1**

Answer: **The children put on their coats because it was raining. A semicolon can only join two independent clauses, and 'because it was raining' cannot stand alone, so no semicolon is needed here.**

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