**I can use a semi-colon in my writing**

The semi-colon - the least understood piece of punctuation. So, just how can you use the semi-colon in your writing? There is more than one way. Firstly, let us look at the rules.

**Rule 1: The semi-colon can be used instead of a full stop.**

It can link two complete sentences and join them to make one sentence. Any two sentences? Pretty much, but the two sentences must be on the same theme. The semi-colon can be used **instead of** a connective to join the sentences.

Example 1:         The door swung open; a masked figure strode in.
Example 2:         Alex bought a toy car; he played with it as soon as he got home.
Example 3:         She was very tired; she had worked late the night before.

So long as the second 'sentence' after the semi-colon links back to the first 'sentence,' it is correct.

**Rule 2: The semi-colon can be used in a descriptive list.**

When we first write lists lower down the school, we tend to separate items in the list using a comma. However, when we describe each item in the list, the sentence is extended considerably meaning that a semi-colon is more appropriate.

Example At the circus we saw a clown, a lion, a fire-eater an acrobat.

At the circus we saw a clown juggling with swords and daggers; a lion who stood on a ball; a fire eater with flashing eyes and an eight-year-old acrobat.

**Your Turn**
With the five sentences below, use rule 1 to help you place the semi-colon.

The rabbit had been sadly neglected it was in an awful state.
John opened the drawer it was empty.
The wedding invitations have all been sent out two hundred guests are expected.
Tom was very clever and worked hard he deserved to pass all his Sats.
Sally’s birthday is in November John’s is in September.

Explore some of your own sentences where instead of using a conjunction to link sentences. Relate to your letter to Michiya.

E.g. He truly was a remarkable man; every day he would amaze me with his incredible talents.

Please remember that your father is forever in my heart; not a day goes by when I do not think of him.