A Concise Guide to Semi-Colons

Use semi-colons in two ways...

1. To separate long items in a list, especially when the items themselves contain commas:
   - There are three ways in which he is irrational: first, he will not agree with me; second, he refuses to admit how brilliant I am; and third, he persists in his own way of thinking.
   - The cities that are in the running to host the Olympics are Cleveland, Ohio; Phoenix, Arizona; and Seattle, Washington.

2. To join two complete sentences together when they are related in meaning:
   - I am a Republican; he is a Democrat.
   - Dogs are like sponges; they soak up the personalities of their owners.

   Often, a transition word and a comma will introduce the second clause:
   - I have tried to convince him of my views; however, he is very stubborn.
   - A dog is “man’s best friend”; moreover, a dog can help you live longer.

Here are some common transition words to use after a semi-colon, always followed by a comma:

- Also
- Anyway
- Besides
- Consequently
- Finally
- Furthermore
- However
- Incidentally
- Indeed
- Instead
- Likewise
- Meanwhile
- Moreover
- Nevertheless
- Next
- Otherwise
- Similarly
- Still
- Then
- Therefore
- Thus
- After all
- As a result
- At any rate
- At the same time
- By the way
- Even so
- For example
- In addition
- In comparison
- In contrast
- In fact
- In other words
- On the contrary
- On the other hand
- That is