

Using Punctuation as a Rhetorical Tool

"What good writers do is punctuate according to their intended meaning, their intended emphasis" (Dawkins 440).

One grammatical element must be recognized--the independent clause.

Independent clauses can stand alone as complete sentences.

Pairs of independent clauses may be joined with a coordinating conjunction (and, but, for, or, nor, so, yet) and a comma.

<u>Punctuation Mark</u>	<u>Degree of Separation</u>
sentence final (.?!)	maximum
Semicolon (;)	medium
Colon (:)	medium (anticipatory)
Dash (--)	medium (emphatic)
Comma (,)	minimum

I loved the book.

I hated the movie.

1. I loved the book, but I hated the movie.
2. I loved the book; I hated the movie. (opinion seems final, no concessions)
3. I loved the book; however, I hated the movie. (the "however" adds a note of deliberation, a degree of thoughtfulness)
4. I loved the book: I hated the movie. (The colon commands special attention--it says, "pause and pay attention to what follows.")
5. I loved the book--hated the movie.