

Chapter 10

Later that afternoon AJ returned from Miss Vile's office. He didn't seem to have minded his little chat; he came back smiling.

"She gave me a lollipop," he told Amber enthusiastically. Amber remained suspicious; she wanted to know more.



"Was Lucifer in the room with you?" she asked.

"He was sitting on one of the chairs," AJ answered.

"And did he speak to you?" Amber wanted to know.

"Don't be silly," replied AJ. "Cats can't talk." And he refused to say any more about it despite Amber's appeals. Amber thought this was very strange; it was contrary to what she had seen and heard earlier in the day. However, she had to admit that apart from the fact that AJ was obviously concealing something, in every other respect he was his usual cheery self.

That could not be said for the rest of the school; everybody seemed to be living on their nerves. And that included the teachers! Over the next few weeks several more teachers left without warning. Miss Philips was joined by Mr George, the PE teacher; Mrs Harris, the music teacher; and Miss Eliot, the reception class teacher. The teachers who replaced them were all very old-fashioned, severe-looking and strict. There was very little fun to be had at St Augustine's any more. Children would often cry on their way to school. Their parents, however, wouldn't hear anything bad said about the school; they were so impressed by the excellent discipline that Miss Vile and her new teachers seemed to instil in the children.

There were lots of conflicting stories being whispered around the playground. Some children would be full of tales about the mistreatment they had suffered; a few were very complimentary about the new regime. There was rumoured to be a cupboard in Miss Vile's office which children would be locked in, along with spiders and rats and blood-sucking bats. But AJ said that the only cupboard in Miss Vile's office contained jars of sweets, and this was confirmed by other children in the school. There were two or three children in each class who seemed to be Miss Vile's favourites; AJ was one of these. Amber began to notice that if any child complained about the way they had been treated word would somehow reach Miss Vile, and they were quickly summoned to her office. This concerned Amber because often their grumbling had only been whispered in corners of the playground, away from prying eyes and ears. This could mean only one thing: some of the children were informants. They were spying on behalf of Miss Vile! And Amber suspected AJ of being the chief spy!





Name: _____



I can use the semi-colon to break up clauses in a sentence.

Semi-colons are used to turn two closely linked sentences into one.

Amber remained suspicious; she wanted to know more.

This could be written as two separate sentences.

Amber remained suspicious. She wanted to know more.

Or it could be written using a coordinating conjunction.

Amber remained suspicious and she wanted to know more.

Place the semi-colon in the sentences below. (The italics are there to help you.)

- 1 Amber didn't trust AJ anymore *he had been acting very strangely.*
- 2 There seemed to be no secrets from Miss Vile *there were spies everywhere.*
- 3 Amber was looking forward to the holidays *it would soon be half-term.*
- 4 AJ didn't call for her over the holidays *it seemed they were no longer friends.*
- 5 She didn't want to go back to school *the holiday was over too quickly.*
- 6 She walked to school on her own *AJ was nowhere to be seen.*



Remove the coordinating conjunctions and replace them with a semi-colon.

- 7 The children had a nasty surprise in assembly, **for** all the teachers were new.
.....
- 8 Not one of the old staff was left, **and** even Mrs Rose, the deputy, had gone.
.....
- 9 The young children were scared, **so** some began to cry.
.....
- 10 Miss Vile smiled at them, **but** there was something menacing about her smile.
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Extension See if you can find how semi-colons have been used in the passage.





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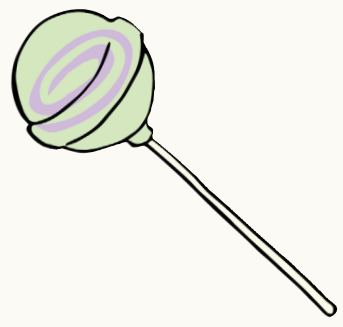
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Link the two sentences with a semi-colon, and write them as one sentence with two related clauses.

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