# After Dark

Study how semicolons shape a model text.

**12.5.W.10** "Students will write using correct semicolon mechanics."

NAME _____ DATE _____

## 1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

**YOUR JOB** Underline every semicolon in the passage. Number each one 1 if it joins complete thoughts or 2 if it separates items in a detailed list.

### Jupiter from the Library Roof

1. At 1:40 a.m., the roof of the public library becomes an observatory. Volunteers carry a small telescope up the stairs; the elevator stops one floor below the roof. Streetlights wash the pavement in amber, but a nearby park blocks some of the glare. The group has come to watch Jupiter, not to discover a new planet. Through the eyepiece, the planet appears as a pale disk; several bright points nearby are among its largest moons. Some visitors expect a dramatic, colorful view; however, the telescope shows a quiet scene in shades of gray.

2. Before anyone looks, the volunteers set out three kits: a red flashlight, a star chart, and a clipboard for the guide; a spare eyepiece, lens cloth, and case for the equipment lead; a folding stool, warm blanket, and thermos for guests. A breeze nudges the chart across the roof, and someone pins it beneath a water bottle. Red light helps visitors keep their eyes adjusted to the dark; bright white light would make faint details harder to see. At the telescope, each guest takes a turn and describes one detail without guessing what it means.

3. At 2:15 a.m., a thin cloud moves in front of Jupiter. The planet fades from the eyepiece; nevertheless, the group stays on the roof to compare what each person noticed. One visitor saw a moon close to the planet; another noticed that the moons seemed to line up. Their notes cannot settle every question about distance or motion, but they give the guide a starting point for the next session. The cloud finally breaks, and Jupiter returns to view. No one gets a sharper image by wishing for one; careful looking and patient notes are the tools available tonight.

## 2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. In the sentence about carrying the telescope upstairs, what complete thought appears on each side of the semicolon?

2. Why are semicolons used between the three kits in paragraph 2? Name one comma-separated detail within a kit.

3. In the sentence beginning “The planet fades,” what punctuation appears immediately before and after “nevertheless”? Why is the mark before it appropriate?

4. Copy the sentence beginning “One visitor saw” and replace its semicolon with a period. What two complete sentences result?

## 3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write exactly three sentences about a community garden preparing for a storm. In order, use a semicolon to join two complete thoughts, use a semicolon before a transition word, and use semicolons to separate three list items that each contain a comma.

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## PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline every semicolon in the passage. Number each one 1 if it joins complete thoughts or 2 if it separates items in a detailed list. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

## PART 2 · ANSWERS

| # | QUESTION | ANSWER |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | In the sentence about carrying the telescope upstairs, what complete thought appears on each side of the semicolon? | **Volunteers carry a small telescope up the stairs. The elevator stops one floor below the roof.** |
| 2 | Why are semicolons used between the three kits in paragraph 2? Name one comma-separated detail within a kit. | **The semicolons separate kits whose contents already contain commas. The guide's kit includes a red flashlight, a star chart, and a clipboard.** |
| 3 | In the sentence beginning "The planet fades," what punctuation appears immediately before and after "nevertheless"? Why is the mark before it appropriate? | **A semicolon comes before "nevertheless," and a comma comes after it. The semicolon joins two complete thoughts.** |
| 4 | Copy the sentence beginning "One visitor saw" and replace its semicolon with a period. What two complete sentences result? | **One visitor saw a moon close to the planet. Another noticed that the moons seemed to line up.** |

## PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Rain pressed against the greenhouse windows; the gardeners moved the seed trays away from the leaks. The forecast called for strong winds; therefore, they tied down the loose tarps. They secured three areas: the bean trellis, bent by the wind; the tool shed, crowded with pots; and the compost bins, covered with lids.

For the marking job, accept 1 for semicolons joining complete thoughts, including those before transition words, and 2 for the two semicolons separating kits. In the final task, check that each sentence uses its assigned semicolon pattern and that commas separate details within all three list items.