

COLON and SEMICOLON

Colon

Use a colon after a complete statement to introduce related details. **DO NOT** use a colon after “are” or “include” or “such as”. Colons can introduce a list, a quotation, an example, an emphatic assertion, or an appositive.

Colons can introduce:	Examples:
A List	His backpack is filled with school supplies: a graphing calculator, textbooks, and a laptop computer.
A Quotation	In “Old Times on the Mississippi,” Mark Twain describes the river town he grew up in: “After all these years I can picture that old time to myself now, just as it was then. . .”
An Example	He participates in many sports: baseball and golf are his favorites.
An Emphatic Assertion	This is your last chance: If you don’t turn in all your assignments, you won’t pass the class.
An Appositive (renames or identifies the material preceding the colon)	Finally the announcer introduced the speaker we had all come to hear: Maya Angelou.

Exercise: Write a sentence of your own in the space below each example, demonstrating the **SAME** use of the colon.

- Her purpose in entering the track race was simple: to win.

- She had enjoyed the experience of meeting three of her favorite authors: Tim O’Brien, John Grisham, and Anne Quindlen.

- When George went into his supervisor’s office, he forgot his planned speech and blurted out: “I demand a raise.”

- My favorite line from Shakespeare is:

- These points may be summarized as follows: make a firm commitment, work hard, and ask questions when you need to.

SEMICOLON

A semicolon is used to join two independent clauses when the second clause restates the first or when the two clauses are of equal emphasis.

Semicolon Use:	Examples:
1. Use a semicolon to separate clauses of compound sentences having no coordinating conjunction.	Cecilia’s car wouldn’t start; she had left the lights on all day.
2. Use a semicolon to separate clauses of compound sentences joined by a transitional word (nonetheless, therefore, nevertheless, however, etc.)	Lucio studied hard all semester; therefore, he received a good grade in his English class.
3. Use a semicolon to separate elements of a series in which items already contain commas.	The college choir is traveling to St. Louis, Missouri; Miami, Florida; and Phoenix, Arizona.

Exercise

1. Write two original sentences that require a semicolon to join two main clauses that have closely related ideas.

2. Write two original sentences that require a semicolon to join two main clauses that are connected by a transitional word.

3. Write two original sentences that require a semicolon to separate elements of a series in which items already contain commas.