

INTERMEDIATE PUNCTUATION

COLONS (:)

Colons are used for the purpose of explaining the contents of a previously completed thought, proving ideas by providing further material for scrutiny, and/or providing a list of nouns to what is discussed before.

SEPARATING MAIN CLAUSES

When a main clause (or full sentence) follows a colon, the first letter of the next main clause must be an upper-case letter or capitalized.

Example: (Complete Sentence following the colon)

John is thinking about a new career: Firefighting seems interesting.

Otherwise, any material (such as a list) following a colon is lower-case.

Example: (Other material following the colon)

When you want to make vegan pancakes, be sure to have the following ingredients: flour, oil, milk, egg substitute, and sugar.

BLOCK QUOTATIONS

Colons are used to acknowledge longer quoted material, especially in block quotations.

Example: (Block quotation)

William Shakespeare remarked highly on humankind, claiming:

What a piece of work is a man, how noble in reason, how infinite in faculties, in form and moving how express and admirable, in action how like an angel, in apprehension how like a god! The beauty of the world! The paragon of animals!

Further, the passage alludes to Shakespeare's appreciation of the human form.

LONG QUOTATIONS

Colons may be used for longer quotations as well.

Example: (Longer quotation)

I can't believe what Felix said about Jerry: "He is such a bum, always talking about his dreams and aspirations, but he is never living in the present... if only we could get him some electro-shock therapy."

TITLES AND SUBTITLES

Colons are used to separate titles and subtitles.

Example: (Titles)

Star Wars V: The Empire Strikes Back

LISTING

Colons are typically used to show lists.

Example:

When you go fishing, you will need the following: a fishing pole, some hooks, a sinker, a reel, and some bait.

SEMICOLONS

Semicolons are punctuation marks which help to connect, separate, and clarify.

SEPARATING MAIN CLAUSES

Semicolons are used to separate closely related main clauses (i.e., complete sentences).

Example:

The toddler grabbed the cup; he did not know what to do with it.

Notice how the first letter of the second sentence is not capitalized. Do not capitalize the word unless the word can be capitalized in the middle of a sentence (as in proper nouns and "I").

COMPLEX VARIABLES WITH ITEMS-IN-A-SERIES

Semicolons are used to help separate items-in-a-series which already contain commas.

Example:

When you have your party, you should invite Carolyn, Shaun's wife; Stacy, Dean's wife; Jennifer, Ted's wife; and, Samantha, Jerry's wife.

TRANSITIONS WITH CONJUNCTS

Semicolons are used to separate independent clauses with conjunctive adverbs, short introductory elements, or conjunctions.

Example:

I love to go to the movies; however, my wife always wants to see these unsettling feminine dramas.

Note that a comma must be used immediately following the conjunctive adverb, short introductory element, or conjunction.

Memorize this little formula (to use when separating clauses):

; + conjunctive adverb + ,

Example:

My wife took me to see *Pride & Prejudice*; additionally, she took me to see *Sense & Sensibility*.