
Colons and Semicolons

— Grammar Mania Monday —

The Big Idea

A **semicolon** separates parts in a sentence. It is stronger than a comma but not as strong as a period.

A **colon** shows that a list follows. Colons are used after greetings in business letters and in expressions of time.

Semicolons in Compound Sentences

- Use a semicolon to join parts of a **compound sentence** without a **coordinating conjunction**.
 - The mistake was simple; the result was disastrous.
 - Our evil English teacher assigned us a ton of homework; she makes us write all the time!
- Use a semicolon between parts of a **compound sentence** when the clauses are long and complicated or when they contain commas.
 - Pony Express riders were young, strong men; and they rode for many hours at a stretch, persisted in bad weather, and avoided fights with settlers.

Semicolons with Items in a Series

- When there are commas within parts in a series, use semicolons to separate the parts.
 - Bodies within the solar system include nine planets; about 50 satellites, such as Earth's moon; more than 1,000 comets, such as Halley's comet; and thousands of asteroids.
 - The riders were expected to treat the horses, oxen, and other animals well; to carry horns to sound their arrival; and, above all, to reach their destinations on time.

Colons

- Use a colon to introduce a list of items.
 - Planets revolve around the sun in this order: Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto.
 - Mars has these earthlike features: ice covered poles, an atmosphere, and changing seasons.
 - Do not use a colon directly after a verb or a preposition!
 - Through the telescope he saw: Mars, the Red Planet.
- Use a colon after the formal greeting in a business letter or letter of complaint.
 - Dear Principal Miller:
- Use a colon between hours and minutes in expressions of time.
 - The lecture starts at 7:30 P.M. A reception follows at 9:00 P.M.

Colon & Semicolon Practice

The reporter interviewed the following people the department heads the members of the faculty council and a representative group of students.

I am hot I am wearing a sweater
and a jacket.

The answers to the test are 1, A
2, D 3, F and 4, B.

Our soccer game starts at 730.

The group was composed of three young people Mary, who was 32 years old Javier, who was 28 years old and Ming, who was 17 years old.

I gave you the spray bottles for
one reason to clean the windows.

You will need the following ingredients milk sugar flour and eggs.

Dear Mr. Kurasu of the Kiragowa
Corporation

I have invited the following
people to my party Kevin Amy
and Keeley.

There is only one way to make it
to the top hard work.

Individual Practice

1. Captain Kidd was tried and hanged, Sir Francis Drake was knighted by the queen.
2. Thomas likes pirate stories, therefore, I recommended *Treasure Island*.
3. Alison likes three subjects language arts, history, and science.
4. Let's ask Jonathan, he's the expert.
5. Sylvia is the most talented, however, she doesn't practice enough.
6. Successful diving for treasure depends on three things good research, good weather, and good luck.
7. The test is at 300 not 330.
8. Treasure diving is fun, financing an expedition is hard work.