

Semi-colons and Colons

- Understand when semi-colons and colons are used
- Know how to use semi-colons and colons

Semi-colons

Semi-colons are used for two main reasons:

1. Semi-colons are used between two separate **clauses** that are connected in terms of content.

Example

I can't wait to eat in the restaurants in Italy; spaghetti is one of my favourite foods.

2. A semi-colon can be used to separate items in a list, when the items in the list are more than two or three words, or when one or more of the items contain commas.

Example

For my birthday I would like: the latest action video game; a new black leather jacket; a trip to a theme park; and a small party.

The meeting includes people who have come from Leeds, West, Yorkshire; Congleton, Cheshire; Wem, Shropshire; and other places too.

Tip

Semi-colons separate independent clauses that make sense on their own. Think of taking the conjunction out of a sentence and replacing it with a semi-colon.

The items are more than two words so they need to be separated by semi-colons.

The items contain commas so they need to be separated by semi-colons.

Colons

Colons are used for a number of reasons:

1. Colons are used to introduce a series of items.

Example

I want the following: a camera, memory cards and money.



2. Colons are used to introduce numbered or bullet-point lists.

Example

Here are the essentials for being a good footballer:

- strength
- skill
- power
- luck.



3. A colon can be used to introduce a long **quotation**.

Example

The author of 'Red', Natasha Quick, wrote in the first chapter:

'I am angry again, so I am going to write some songs about it.'

Key Point

Semi-colons separate sentences and complex units in lists.
Colons introduce lists.



Quick Test

Put the semi-colons or colons in these sentences.

1. I am going to Yorkshire I love the scenery.
2. I need someone who can do the following type, collect the post and make tea.
3. I like Greece the weather there is very warm.

Key Words

- Semi-colon
- Clause
- Colon
- Quotation