Colons



Colons can be used to introduce a list or an explanation.

Our playground has lots of things: a slide, a roundabout and swings.

In an explanation, the first part is explained by the second part. → I'm so tired: I didn't sleep last night.

The part before the colon must always be a main clause.

1 **These sentences have too many colons. Cross out the colons which aren't needed.**

You need several things for the trip: a rucksack, a clipboard: and some paper.

I've forgotten my house: keys: I left in such a rush: this morning.

The fire procedure is simple: sound the alarm, leave: calmly: and call 999.

I can't: possibly eat this: it's got mushrooms: in it.

I don't think this house is suitable: there's a huge hole: in the roof.

My brother has three jobs: painter, removal: man: and waiter.

I am going to build: a rocket this weekend: I want to go: to space.

2 **Tick the sentences which use colons correctly.**

Nadine has three best friends: Nina, Cat and Molly. ☐

I am stuck on this game I can't: get past the first level. ☐

Mum likes: cooking, jogging and painting. ☐

I can't wait for tomorrow: we're going to a museum. ☐

I can speak three languages: French, Italian and Thai. ☐

Mr Blake is feeling miserable he's hurt: his back. ☐

The part before the colon must be a main clause.

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3 **Add the colons in the correct places in these sentences.**

Dad has loads of tools in his shed saws, spanners and hammers.

The crew feared Captain Rogers he had never lost a sword fight.

Enzo was crying in the kitchen he had burnt the dinner again.

I have a short Christmas list a board game, a jumper and a puppy.

Sabrina has very unusual pets two spiders, a snake and a hedgehog.

Pancakes have three main ingredients eggs, milk and flour.

I'm going to wear two pairs of tights today it's freezing outside.

I'm expecting three packages a phone cover, a skirt and some boots.

Rob doesn't like going outside at night he's afraid of bats.

4 **Choose three items from the box to complete each list using a colon.**

bread, cakes, tennis, pastries, netball, ladybirds, crickets, hockey, bees

Our bakery sells lots of things .....

I have three favourite insects .....

I play three sports .....

5 **Write a sentence about the picture below which includes a colon.**



.....

.....

"I can use colons to introduce lists and explanations."

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Semi-Colons



Semi-colons can separate long phrases or clauses in a list.
This is usually when there are other punctuation marks in the items.

At the vets I saw three tiny, ginger cats; two dogs, both with broken legs; and a long-haired rabbit.

Unlike with commas, you need a semi-colon before the last item.

Semi-colons can also join two clauses in a sentence instead of a conjunction.
They both have to be main clauses, equally important and about the same thing.

Jake hated the film; Helena thought it was brilliant.

1 **Write out the pairs of main clauses with a semi-colon and a full stop.**

I got a new bike

my brother got a car

.....

My dad is English

my mum is German

.....

I love ballet

my cousin loves tap

.....

2 **Tick the sentences where a semi-colon could be used instead of the conjunction.**

Find a place to hide or you'll be in trouble. ☐

The robber grabbed his bag and ran away. ☐

I was absolutely starving so ate the lot. ☐

I couldn't believe it but I had come last. ☐

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3 **Add the missing semi-colons to these lists.**

Jonas had Geography, where they were taking samples in the field History, his favourite by far and then English with Mr Jeffries.

The trapeze artists flew through the air, effortlessly and skilfully the magicians, my favourite, made all sorts of things vanish and the three fire-breathers were truly breathtaking!

The flight was late, delayed by three hours the seats were uncomfortable, especially mine and the in-flight food was horrid.

Ice skating is difficult: it hurts when you fall over, which happens a lot you have to be careful with the blades on your boots and you have to avoid others on the ice, which can be tricky!

4 **Finish the sentence using the words in boxes and semi-colons.**

then she spread the mixture into a baking tin

first she mixed all the ingredients together

then she baked it for twenty minutes.

Gemma baked a cake: .....

.....

.....

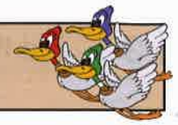
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"I can break up lists and sentences with semi-colons."



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Colons and Semi-Colons



Remember, colons introduce lists and explanations, and semi-colons break up lists and clauses in a sentence. Punctuation can change the meaning:

I sleep all day; I work all night

A semi-colon means that these two parts are related and equally important, but they're separate.

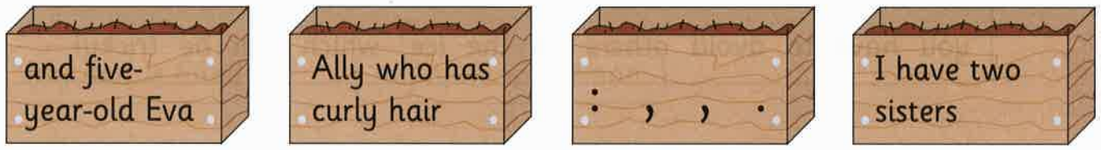
I sleep all day: I work all night

With a colon, the second part explains the first part, so this means I sleep all day because I work all night.

1 **Write out the words and punctuation in the crates into full sentences.**



.....



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2 **Complete each sentence with either a colon or a semi-colon.**

I ate all my vegetables ..... carrots, peas and broccoli.

We need to clean the house ..... the Queen is coming.

London is a capital city ..... Ulverston is a small town.

We have three ducks ..... Beatrice, Eugene and Nigel.

Grasshoppers have six legs ..... spiders have eight legs.

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3 **Write out the sentences, replacing the conjunction with a colon or a semi-colon.**

Kim stayed outside because Gran had come round.

.....

On Monday I bake and on Tuesday I sew.

.....

Ali groomed her dog as the pageant was tomorrow.

.....

Harry is a painter whilst Yuri is a teacher.

.....

I can make pasta, but I can't make pancakes.

.....

Nico screamed because the room was on fire!

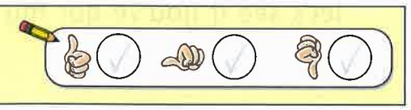
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4 **Punctuate these passages with colons and semi-colons.**

Everyone had helped with the show Mrs Dastur had painted the sets, one for every scene all the children, even the reception class, had made props and the mayor had let them use the village hall.

The explorer told an exciting tale he had waded across rivers, fighting crocodiles in his path slept in trees, without a hammock, with the monkeys and examined all sorts of wonderful insects.

"I can use colons and semi-colons correctly."



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