

# COLONS [:]

## AND SEMI-COLONS [;]

Colons and semi-colons can add interest to your sentences and can help to express your ideas more clearly. Here are some guidelines for their correct use.

### The following are examples of colon use:

*To indicate a relationship between two statements, where the second statement expands or illustrates the first:*

- The television set, as the icon of the information age, represents the realisation of a dream for human kind: that knowledge and experience can be transmitted and shared across the boundaries of time and space.
- Morgan consistently undermined the study: the outcome was a disaster.
- Buy these things: a packet of peanuts, two loaves of bread, and a kilogram of steak.

*To introduce a quotation:*

- Peter Coveney made this comment about the nineteenth-century's use of children in fiction: The purpose and strength of...

*To indicate a ratio:*

- The odds were 20:5 against the team winning.

*To separate hours from minutes:*

- The train leaves at 8:30 a.m.

### The following are examples of semi-colon use:

*To emphasise that two complete sentences are closely linked:*

- Grammar is easy; I learned it quickly.
- Don't go near the lions; they could bite you. This is an example where a colon could also be used as the second clause expands on the first.

*To separate items in a list if the list already includes commas:*

- Members of the band include Harold Rostein, clarinetist; Tony Aluppo, tuba player; and Lee Jefferson, trumpeter.
- He has lived in Sydney, Australia; Auckland, New Zealand; and New York, USA.

*To separate items in a complex list:*

- The recipe required three cups of flour; two cups of milk; a cup of sugar; and six eggs.