

## Rules for the colon and semicolon

1. Use a colon to introduce a list, especially after a statement that uses such words as *these*, *the following*, or *as follows*. If a list immediately follows a verb or a preposition, do NOT use a colon to introduce it.
  - a. Maria's class schedule is as follows: English, history, math.
  - b. The author Alice Walker writes poetry, articles, essays, and fiction.
2. Use a colon to introduce material that illustrates, explains, or restates the preceding material. Notice that a complete sentence following a colon is capitalized!
  - a. You can see how bitterly cold the winters are in Alaska: On a windy morning your breath freezes into ice crystals in front of you
3. Use a colon to introduce a long or formal quotation.

A formal quotation is preceded by words such as *these*, *the following*, or *as follows*.

  - a. Lincoln began the Gettysburg Address with these famous words:  
"Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation..."

A long quotation would be either a line of poetry that takes up several lines or prose that takes up more than several lines

  - a. Stephen Crane makes this admission in his poem "Truth":  
For truth was to be  
A bread, a wind...
4. Use a colon between the hour and minute of the precise time, between the chapter and the verse in biblical references, and after the salutation of a business letter.

## The Semicolon

1. Use a semicolon to separate main clauses that are not joined by a coordinating conjunction.
2. Use a semicolon to separate main clauses joined by a conjunctive adverb followed by a comma or by an expression such as *for example* or *that is*.
3. Use a semicolon to separate the items in a series when these items contain commas.
4. Use a semicolon to separate two main clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction when such clauses already contain several commas.