

Colons and semicolons

When to use colons and semicolons

A Add the correct punctuation to the following sentences.

- 1 A number of children still need to bring in their signed permission slips before they can go on the school trip: Hiroto, Dana, Nathan, Abdul Arjun and Teodora.
- 2 You will need to bring in seven ingredients to make the fairy cakes: flour, sugar, butter, eggs, milk, icing sugar and chocolate buttons.
- 3 He had a lot of things on his birthday wish list: a new computer game, an art set, a book, a scooter, a mobile phone with earphones to play music and a tin of sweets.

B Connect the following sentences by using a semicolon and making the appropriate adjustments.

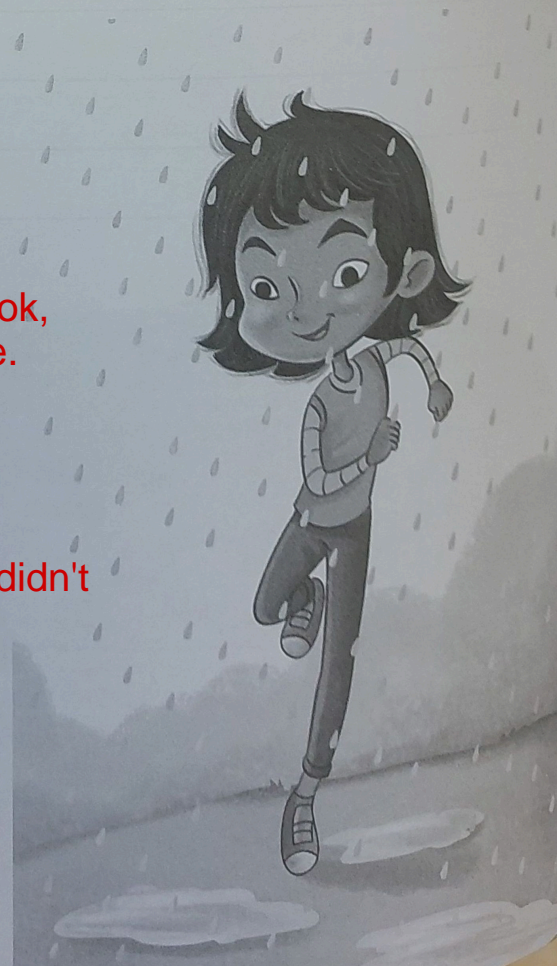
- 1 Some people like to eat breakfast as soon as they get up; ~~Other~~ ^{other} people are unable to eat until they've been awake for a couple of hours.
- 2 Many people dislike jogging in the rain and getting wet; ~~Personally,~~ ^{personally} I find it very enjoyable.
- 3 Leo hadn't realised that his brother had left his wet painting on the seat when he sat down; ~~Now~~ ^{now} his new trousers were ruined.

C Write two sentences of your own using a colon.

Tailor had many things in his bag: a book, a pencil case, a ruler and a water bottle.

Write two sentences of your own using a semicolon.

The teacher was absent; the students didn't get a free class.



- Learn about colons and semicolons
- Use them correctly

Colons and semicolons

A **colon** : is used to begin a list.

Example: In her pencil case, Jana has: a ruler, an eraser, scissors, pencils and a pencil sharpener.

A Write the sentences out, putting the colons in the correct places.

- 1 I have lived in many cities: Rome, Sydney, Dubai and London.
- 2 Your plan has three advantages: it is cheap, it is sensible and it is fun.
- 3 Roald Dahl writes: children's books, short stories, novels and poems.

A **semicolon** ; can be used to separate longer phrases in a list.

Commas are already used within the short phrases, so using a semicolon makes the list of items clearer.

Example: Yesterday, I bought these items: some large, ripe bananas; six large, fresh bread rolls; a small, blue bowl; and three boxes of tea.

B Write a sentence listing the items from Bright Dawn's sled. Use a colon before the list starts and semicolons in between the items.

a pair of walking boots half a chocolate bar a first aid kit
a sleeping bag fur-lined slippers a bottle of water

Bright Dawn had many things on her sled: a pair of walking boots; half a chocolate bar; a first aid kit; a sleeping bag; fur-lined slippers and a bottle of water.

A **semicolon** can also be used instead of **and** or **but** to join two related sentences.

Example: The boy burst through the door **and** he glared at me.

The boy burst through the door; he glared at me.

C Match the sentences below using a semicolon to join them.

Example: Fruit is good for you; burgers are not.

I listened to the rain he prefers tennis.

1. I listened to the rain; I love rain.

The plates are in the cupboard I love rain.

2. The plates are in the cupboard; the spoons are in the drawer.

She loves playing football the spoons are in the drawer.

3. She loves playing football; he prefers tennis.