

Colons are used to introduce lists, quotations and explanations:

He bought: eggs, flour, sugar and milk. His reason was this: the birthday cake.

Semi-colons have several uses. The most common ones are:

- in **complex lists**: He has frogs and bats; snails and mice; pigs and cows.
- to **link sentences** instead of conjunctions: Mice eat cheese; cows eat grass.
- to **precede conjunctions** such as: however, nevertheless, that is to say.

1. Write the missing colons and commas, if required, in these sentences.

- a The list of ingredients included chicken onions mushrooms tomatoes and seasoning.
- b The characters in the story included Dorothy the lion the scarecrow and the tin man
- c I am away on the following days 3 March 22 April 8 and 15 May.
- d Your duties to sweep the stairs and to dust the hall.

2. Write the missing colons in these explanations.

- a There was only one thing they could do hide.
- b The information had just come through the contract was signed.
- c The exam results were on the notice board they had all passed.

3. Write the missing semi-colons in these complex lists.

- a She sent cards to Mike in Melbourne Laura in Perth Ravi in California and Heidi in Iowa.
- b The chef-needed strips of raw chicken thin slices of courgettes some bamboo shoots and oil.

4. Use semi-colons to join the two main clauses in these sentences.

- a Some people are good at games some are not.
- b A few of us wanted to go to India the rest wanted to go to Thailand.
- c She had been brought up in France but they still considered her to be English.

5. Write semi-colons before the conjunctions in these sentences.

- a She was encouraged to run every day however, it was not compulsory.
- b No one stood over him while he worked nevertheless, he always tried his hardest.

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Hyphens and dashes

Hyphens can be used:

- to form **compound** words:
steam-roller
- to clarify the **meaning** of some words:
He saw a man-eating tiger. (Not a man eating tiger for dinner)
- to **split** the word at the end of a syllable if the whole word cannot be written on one line:
amuse-
ment.

Dashes are used to show breaks in sentences in informal writing and for emphasis:

There were five cats on the sofa – and they were all black.

1. Put the missing hyphens into these compound words.

- a hanggliding _____ b sisterinlaw _____
- c windowshopping _____ d weightbearing _____

2. Put the missing hyphens into these sentences.

- a The passers by looked at the new poster.
- b Peru is a Spanish speaking country.
- c The alarm made a high pitched sound.
- d The baby sitter arrived at 7.30 pm.

3. Put hyphens into these words to show sensible places to split them if they each had to be split across two lines.

- a marvellous _____ b opportunity _____

4. Use dashes to emphasise a point being made in each of these sentences.

- a He had originally thought there was no point in running but he changed his mind!
- _____

- b I'll say it again I don't think you're listening.
- _____

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