

Punctuation: Semicolons, Colons, and Commas

[GB1](#), [GB2](#), [CCC 1](#), [CCC 2](#), [IXL 1](#), [IXL 2](#), [IXL 3](#), [Chomp Chomp 1](#), [Chomp Chomp 2](#)

Semicolons

Semicolons (;) have one rule: they separate complete sentences.

Semicolons can also be used to separate items in a list when each individual item is long or has commas in its description, but this usage has not been tested recently:

- I like dogs, cats, and birds.
- I like cute, happy dogs; friendly, adorable cats; and squawking, feathered birds.

Colons

Colons (:) have two rules:

- A colon can only come after a complete sentence.
- A colon acts like an = sign: what comes after it must "equal" what comes before it.

- ~~The three things I need are: food, water, and air.~~
- I need three things to live: food, water, and air.
- I need three things to live = food, water, and air.
- I left for one reason: I really had to pee.
- I left for one reason = I really had to pee.

Commas

Commas have many rules, but the first one is that a comma *and a conjunction* can separate two complete sentences. A comma alone *cannot* separate complete sentences.

Insert a semicolon, colon, or comma in each sentence below.

1. Bob said that he agreed with the idea__ David said that he was against it.
2. There was only one reason I agreed with Bob__ he had thought about it for years.
3. David didn't like this__ and he stated his dissatisfaction very clearly.
4. I didn't mind__ but I wish he had been more polite about it.
5. I thought about what to do and realized I had three choices__ confront him, have a friend talk to him, or stay silent.
6. Eventually I decided not to talk to him__ it wasn't worth the trouble.
7. Still, it left a bad taste in my mouth__ I never looked at him the same way again.