

Colons

Colons are used to emphasize, to introduce, and to separate.

In a sentence in which you have two independent clauses and one of those clauses either emphasizes or clarifies the other, you will use a colon.

1. Over the last decade, teaching tools have changed to various types of digital media: smart rooms now offer Internet access, document cameras, and smart boards.
2. The dog, though eager for affection, had to be treated for various contagious diseases: we had to use gloves to avoid transferring the skin diseases.

You may use a colon to announce a list.

1. Please bring the following items to the next meeting: note taking materials, recording devices, and copies of the last meeting's minutes.
2. The speaker failed to do the following: engage his audience, speak with enthusiasm, provide clear visuals, and lacked adequate information.

There are two types of colon usage for quotes: 1) If you are using a block quotation, you might introduce that blocked quote with a signal word that is part of a complete sentence. 2) If the signal word or phrase is in a complete sentence form, you could use a colon instead of a comma.

1. Corbet and Connors (1999) wrote:
In most ads, as in most forms of technical writing, the least prominent of the components is the speaker/writer. Who is addressing us in the ad? Most ads are composed by the staff of the ad agency that the company or the manufacturer hired. The speaker or writer in the ad—unlike the speaker or writer in a speech or essay—is not a particular person; it is usually a corporate person created by the ad agency. (3)
2. The veterans, concerned about privacy, asked the questions: “Can they find out who turned them in? Can you guarantee us that no one will tell?”

Use a colon to separate elements.

1. *Hours, minutes, and seconds*
4:00 PM
1:32:14
2. *Salutations in formal letters*
Dear Dr. Smith:
3. *Ratios*
4:2
4. *Biblical chapters and verses*
John 3:12
5. *Between titles and subtitles*
The Bird Watcher: A Complete Guide
6. *Between the city and the publishers in bibliographical information*
New York: Oxford University Press, 1999