Colons vs. Semicolons

COLONS
a basic overview

A COLON CAN BE USED TO...

- To introduce a list, a quotation, an example, or a noun. IMPORTANT! What falls on the left of the colon MUST be a complete sentence.

  Ex. We talked about many animals: dogs, giraffes, and elephants.

- Join two complete sentence when the second sentence summarizes or explains the first. Their content must be very closely related.

  Ex. Life is like a box of chocolates: you never know what you're gonna get.

BASIC RULE: WHAT COMES BEFORE THE COLON MUST BE A COMPLETE SENTENCE ON ITS OWN.

SEMI COLONS
a basic overview

A SEMICOLON CAN BE USED TO...

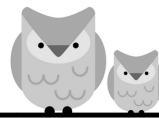- Separate items in a list, when those items already contain commas

  Ex. I bought shiny, ripe apples; sweet, juicy pears; and green, baby spinach.

- Join two COMPLETE sentences that are related to each other. A complete sentence is an independent clause; it can stand on its own. They have their own subject and verb.

  Ex. I went to the store today; I bought fruit and veggies.

BASIC RULE: YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO REPLACE THE SEMI COLON WITH A PERIOD AND STILL HAVE TWO COMPLETE SENTENCES.

Colons vs. Semicolons

NOW YOU PRACTICE!

Correct each sentence by adding or remove a colon or semicolon.
HINT: some sentences are already correct
answers are at the bottom right corner.

1. I have a big test tomorrow, I can't go out.

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2. You asked for: forgiveness.

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3. He is on his way therefore, we can't leave yet.

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4. The American flag has three colors; red, blue, white.

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5. Don't forget to eat breakfast, it's important!

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6. This is what I ate for breakfast: apples, yoghurt, oatmeal.

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7. The window was open I looked out the window.

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8. He reads a lot; books, poems, and short stories.

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9. If you don't understand, please ask questions.

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10. I don't like blue, ballpoint pens, pencils, or yellow, bright highlighters.

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11. Spain is lovely hot weather and delicious food.

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1 replace comma with semi colon/2 remove colon/3 semi colon before 'therefore'/4 replace semicolon with colon/5 replace comma with colon/6 correct/7 add semicolon after 'open'/8 replace semicolon with colon/9 correct/10 need semicolon after pens, and after pencils/11 colon between lovely and hot