

## COLON

Colons and semicolons serve different functions. Colons mainly signal “what I mean” or “this is how you say it”.

Confused about how you use colons, here’s a list of 9 rules which could help you perfect its usage.

- To present an item or a series of items. The word that follows the colon needs to not be capitalized.

Example:

1. The kids know what must be done: listen.
2. For the event, everyone is required to bring basic camping materials: rope, poles, water bottle, and a lighter.
3. We are looking for a secretary who can do the following: type reports, edit manuscripts, and proofread articles.
4. I went to the market and bought lots of vegetables: carrots, spinach, potatoes, and cabbage.
5. She got what she expensively paid for: a black diamond.

- Do not put a colon directly after a verb.

Example:

1. I like: apples, oranges, and pineapples.
2. I must try: Chinese fried rice, tofu, and sweet and sour pork.
3. I want: surfing, kayaking, and paragliding.
4. I want to buy: mugs, table mat, spoons and forks, and some plates.

Instead, you should write these.

- a) *I would love to try these fruits: apples, oranges, and pineapples.*
- b) *Here’s a list of what I want to try: Chinese fried rice, tofu, and sweet and sour pork.*
- c) *Extreme activities are my favorites: surfing, kayaking, and paragliding.*
- d) *My mum asked me to buy a few things: mugs, table mat, spoons and forks, and some plates.*

- When listing one by one, a colon is used following the context. Capitalization and full stop punctuation become optional when the words before it, are letters, numbers, or

phrases. However, capitalization and full stop punctuation are needed if words following it express a complete thought.

Example:

1. These things we need to do:
    - a. check papers
    - b. write reports
    - c. create a spreadsheet
  2. Here are the things they need:
    - a. Detergent to wash the clothes.
    - b. Gloves for planting the trees.
    - c. Empty bottles for decorations.
  3. These are the rules our homeroom teacher posted:
    - a. Do not use phones.
    - b. Listen to the instructions.
    - c. Make sure to close the door all the time.
  4. Make sure to get these things inside your bag:
    - a. a sunscreen
    - b. a cap
    - c. a notepad
- A colon can be used between two independent clauses especially if the second sentence paraphrases, illustrates ideas, and/or expands further information. The word after the colon should be capitalized only if there are two sentences following it.

Example:

1. I seldom eat my breakfast: my new job gives me a very hectic schedule in the morning.
  2. He believes in miracles: he talks to the statue of a saint near the church every day.
  3. My company hired many new employees: they are expanding their business.
  4. The new system shocked everyone: the digital feature made everyone novice.
- If a complete quoted sentence follows a colon, capitalize the first letter.

Example:

1. The guest speaker made a good point: "Life never depends on others."
2. My mum used to say this all the time: "I should think positive at all times."
3. My school teacher said this: "It's better to repeat than to cheat."
4. Bill Gates famously said: "Life is not fair, get used to it!"

- If the information after the colon needs two or more sentences, capitalization of each letter must be observed.

Example:

1. There are things that you should never do: Think negatively. Bully others. Cheat on exams.
  2. I think I have to make some announcements here: Live healthily. Be happy all the time.
  3. There are simple rules in life: Go after the things you like. Always ask. Step forward.
  4. My dad said this to have a happy life: Use things, not people. Love people, not things.
- Use colon after a salutation when writing a formal letter. A comma is usually used for informal letters.

Example:

1. Dear Mr. Hall:
2. Dear Mrs. Clooney:
3. Hi David,
4. Dear James,

## EXERCISES

- To present an item or a series of items. The word that follows the colon needs not to be capitalized.

Determine whether a colon is necessary or not in the following sentences and add it when necessary:

1. She gifted herself expensively with a white gold necklace.
2. He knows what he paid for a bouquet of tulips.
3. The company advertised a few jobs a receptionist, a lady guard, and a gardener.
4. The school required us to bring different materials like a matchstick, wood, paper, and towels.
5. The family received what they asked for a beautiful waterbed.
6. I am sure that they need a basket full of fruits.

- Do not put a colon directly after a verb.

Rewrite the following sentences to make it correct.

1. I like to eat different: fruits: jackfruit: durian: and mangosteen.
2. He should try: different kinds of Filipino dishes: Adobo: Sinigang: and Kaldereta.
3. I like: biking, swimming: and kayaking.
4. My nephew wants me to buy: school shoes: bags: pencils: and stickers.
5. My agent brought: mousepad, laptop, and a mobile phone.
6. My friends and I will buy:essential oils, pain reliever, and rubbing alcohol.

- When listing one by one, a colon is used following the context. Capitalization and full stop punctuation become optional when the words are letters, numbers, or phrases. However, capitalization and full stop punctuation are needed if words following it express a complete thought.

Replace the letters after the colon with capital or small letters to make sure it follows the rule. Put a full stop if it is required.

1. These are the list of things we need to complete:
  - a. Check the IP address
  - b. Deliver result
  - c. Make a PPT
2. Here are the things they need:

- a. empty bottles
  - b. hollow blocks
  - c. projector
3. My instructor told me these things:
    - a. i need to wake up early in the morning
    - b. count up to 100 while doing push ups
    - c. I need to record my daily routines
  4. Make sure to get these from the supermarket:
    - a. A handy electric kettle
    - b. Small lunchbox
    - c. A can of corn kernels
    - d. A pack of flour
  5. I need to make sure he understood these instructions:
    - a. kids are not allowed to bully.
    - b. cheating is prohibited
    - c. late submission of projects means score deductions
  6. These are the project details:
    - a. Students have to create a small group of 5
    - b. choose a global issue and identify the key points
    - c. offer possible steps
- A colon can be used between two independent clauses especially if the second sentence paraphrases, illustrates ideas, and/or expands further information. The word after the colon should be capitalized only if there are two sentences following it.

Combine the sentences or phrases using a colon only if it is applicable.

1. The kids have one more thing to say. They wanted a good vacation.
  2. I'm pretty sure we are all good. I've received a text message from our guide.
  3. My phone battery is about to die. I have been playing with it the whole day.
  4. He surely is Tim's son. He looks exactly like his dad.
  5. I have been sneezing the whole day. It rained heavily while I was coming to work.
  6. Ellen made sure that his staff would be scared. She contacted the horror film director for creative ideas.
- If a complete quoted sentence follows a colon, capitalize the first letter.

Complete the sentences with a colon and add your own quote.

1. The vice principal said this to the students.
2. I have visited my doctor quite a few times, and he said this.

3. Tomorrow is the start of our classes. I'm sure that my teacher will inform us about this.
  4. Our classmates reported to us.
  5. The president announced this in the morning.
  6. My mum used to say this all the time.
- If the information after the colon needs two or more sentences, capitalization of each letter must be observed.

Capitalize the letter where necessary.

1. I am making a few announcements here: eat healthily. do good. be happy.
  2. There are a few rules we need to check: Greet one another. arrange the books. cooperate.
  3. These things make me excited: learning new cultures. meeting new friends. Eating traditional dishes.
  4. The dish is very interesting: It's delicious. it's fragrant. it's inviting.
  5. The lecture provided a few insights: Be positive. live harmoniously.
  6. He gave me two reasons why I have to follow the instructions: To get a good score. To show leadership.
- Use colon after a salutation when writing a formal letter. A comma is usually used for informal letters.

Write a colon or a comma based on the given context.

1. Dear Mr. Mays (teacher)
2. Dear Ms. Jonson (HR personnel)
3. Hello Oscar (friend)
4. Hi Uncle Leam (uncle)
5. Dear Dr. Peter (doctor)
6. Dear Officer Ludwig (police)

## ANSWER KEY

- To present an item or a series of items. The word that follows the colon needs not to be capitalized.

Determine whether a colon is necessary or not in the following sentences and add it when necessary:

ANSWER:

1. NO
  2. YES He knows what he paid for: a bouquet of tulips.
  3. YES The company advertised a few jobs: a receptionist, a lady guard, and a gardener.
  4. NO
  5. YES The family received what they asked for: a beautiful waterbed.
  6. NO
- 
- Do not put a colon directly after a verb.

Rewrite the following sentences to make it correct.

ANSWER:

1. I like to eat different fruits: jackfruit, durian, and mangosteen.
  2. He should try different kinds of Filipino dishes: adobo, sinigang, and kaldereta.
  3. I like biking, swimming, and kayaking.
  4. My nephew wants me to buy school shoes, bags, pencils, and stickers.
  5. My agent brought these things: a mousepad, laptop, and a mobile phone.
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Replace the letters after the colon with capital or small letters to make sure it follows the rule.  
Put a full stop if it is required.

ANSWER:

1. These are the list of things we need to complete: (*may capitalized or not*)
    - a. Check the IP address
    - b. Deliver result
    - c. Make a PPT
  2. Here are the things they need: (*may capitalized or not*)
    - a. empty bottles
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  3. My instructor told me these things:
    - a. I need to wake up early in the morning.
    - b. Count up to 100 while doing push ups.
    - c. I need to record my daily routines.
  4. Make sure to get these from the supermarket: (*may capitalized or not*)
    - a. A handy electric kettle
    - b. Small lunchbox
    - c. A can of corn kernels
    - d. A pack of flour
  5. I need to make sure he understood these instructions:
    - a. Kids are not allowed to bully.
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- If a complete quoted sentence follows a colon, capitalize the first letter.

Complete the sentences with a colon and add your own quote.

ANSWER:

1. The vice principal said this to the students: "Follow the school rules."
  2. I have visited my doctor quite a few times, and he said this: "Brush your teeth three times a day."
  3. Tomorrow is the start of our classes. I'm sure that my teacher will inform us about this: "Raise your hand if you want to share your opinion."
  4. Our classmates reported this to us: "Our project is due on Monday."
  5. The president announced this in the morning: "Classes are canceled due to heavy rain."
  6. My mum used to say this all the time: "Live a happy life."
- If the information after the colon needs two or more sentences, capitalization of each letter must be observed.

Capitalize the letter where necessary.

ANSWER:

1. I am making a few announcements here: Eat healthily. Do good. Be happy.

2. There are a few rules we need to check: Greet one another. Arrange the books. Cooperate.
  3. These things make me excited: learning new cultures: Meeting new friends. Eating traditional dishes.
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## Answers

Write a colon or a comma based on the given context.

7. Dear Mr. Mays: (teacher)
8. Dear Ms. Jonson: (HR personnel)
9. Hello Oscar, (friend)
10. Hi Uncle Leam, (uncle)
11. Dear Dr. Peter : (doctor)
12. Dear Officer Ludwig: (police)