

Colons

A colon is used after a complete sentence to indicate a list or explanation will follow. The information after a colon adds more detail and clarity to the sentence before the colon.

Use colons to:

1. introduce a complete sentence or a series of words closely related to the preceding sentence.

Example:

- There are five universities I am considering for my Master's degree: Victoria, Alberta, Ottawa, Queen's, and Dalhousie.

2. introduce a list when signaling words are present. Some signaling words include *these* and *the following*.

Example:

- Please do the following:
 - sweep,
 - wash the dishes,
 - water the plant, and
 - feed the fish.

3. indicate emphasis and illustration.

Examples:

- Lisa's return to Casablanca could mean only one thing: trouble.
- There is one thing I can never get used to seeing on my front porch: a bear.

4. introduce a long quotation after a complete sentence.

Example:

- The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime article on *Human Rights and Workers' Rights* (2011)* describes the causes and consequences of human trafficking: Inequalities in income, education and opportunities are major root causes of human trafficking, inducing many to migrate to seek for a better life. Thousands of migrants instead become victims of labour exploitation, a new form of slavery that occurs on a massive scale. Due to growing inequalities in destination countries, this exploitation is increasingly seen as 'normal'.

* Source: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. 2011. *Protect human rights and workers' rights to end labour exploitation* Retrieved from: <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/frontpage/2011/June/protect-human-rights-and-workers-rights-to-end-labour-exploitation.htm>

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5. Indicate that a full sentence explains more about content in the first sentence when a coordinating conjunction is not used. If one sentence follows the colon do not capitalize the first word following the colon. If more than one sentence follows the colon, capitalize the first word of following the colon.

Examples:

- I love to read fantasy novels: *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* is currently my favourite novel.
- I will never forget something my grandmother always told me: It does not matter if you screw up. What matters is that you learn and move on.

Practice: Colons

Correct punctuation and insert colons where they are needed.

1. To make cookies you need the following flour, eggs, sugar, and butter.
2. There is only one thing left to do, pack.
3. Take these items with you to the beach a book, a hat, and sunscreen.
4. Matthew Brothers gathered data and found that the student population at Saint Mary's University prefers Tim Horton's over Just Us!
The data shows that Tim Horton's is preferred because of its lower prices and variety of snacks. Although Just Us is fair trade its lack of selection outweighs the feel good vibe of omitting the middle man. The data also shows that Tim Horton's provides faster service which is important for students trying to get to class on time.
5. You taught me how to do the following swim, kayak, and fish.
6. To do,
 - clean clutter off desk,
 - sweep the kitchen, and
 - feed the cats.
7. There is only one thing you need to remember when considering wearing socks with sandals, no.
8. Pick one type of sushi to try out California roll, Philadelphia roll, or Dynamite roll.
9. Consider these alternatives steal the loaf of bread and feel guilty or starve.
10. It is too bad she is only interested in one thing, power.

Answers:

1. To make cookies you need the following: flour, eggs, sugar, and butter.
2. There is only one thing left to do: pack.
3. Take these items with you to the beach: a book, a hat, and sunscreen.
4. Matthew Brothers gathered data and found that the student population at Saint Mary's University prefers Tim Horton's over Just Us!
The data shows that Tim Horton's is preferred because of its lower prices and variety of snacks. Although Just Us is fair trade its lack of selection outweighs the feel good vibe of omitting the middle man. The data also shows that Tim Horton's provides faster service which is important for students trying to get to class on time.
5. You taught me how to do the following: swim, kayak, and fish.
6. To do:
 - clean clutter off desk,
 - sweep the kitchen, and
 - feed the cats.
7. There is only one thing you need to remember when considering wearing socks with sandals: no.
8. Pick one type of sushi to try out: California roll, Philadelphia roll, or Dynamite roll.
9. Consider these alternatives: steal the loaf of bread and feel guilty or starve.
10. It is too bad she is only interested in one thing: power.