

# Semicolons and Colons

## Reteaching

Use a **semicolon** in the following ways: to separate items in a series if any of the items contain commas; to separate the independent clauses joined by a conjunction if either clause already contains commas; to join the independent clauses of a compound sentence if no coordinating conjunction is used; and before a conjunctive adverb, or a parenthetical expression, that joins the clauses of a compound sentence.

Dams prevent flooding; provide power to cities, towns, and factories; and supply irrigation water to farms.

Hoover Dam, one of the highest dams in the world, was completed in 1936; but it had been envisioned much earlier.

Hoover Dam was built on the Colorado River; Lake Mead is its reservoir.

It is important to the well-being of the West; in fact, it supplies water all the way to the Pacific Northwest.

Use a **colon** in the following ways: to introduce a list of items; between two independent clauses when the second clause explains or summarizes the first; and to introduce a long or formal quotation.

The following dams are also located in the United States: Grand Coulee Dam, Shasta Dam, and Glen Canyon Dam.

The need for a dam was apparent: the Colorado flooded in the spring and dried to a trickle during the summer.

A local farmer wrote: “It’s impossible to farm seriously when you cannot be confident of a steady supply of water for your crops. This situation is intolerable for farmers.”

Also use a **colon** as in these examples:

Dear Mr. Rogers: 6:15 a.m. Warning: Fire Hazard Genesis 6:9

**Do not use a colon** after a verb, in the middle of a prepositional phrase, or after *because* or *as*.

## Using the Semicolon and Colon

Add the necessary semicolons and colons to the following sentences.

1. The dam consists of three parts the dam itself, the hydroelectric power plant, and the reservoir.
2. Residents felt the dam was desirable in fact, they thought it was essential.
3. Power generated by Hoover Dam is sent to Los Angeles, California Phoenix, Arizona and Las Vegas, Nevada.
4. The dam was named for President Hoover he was in office when it was begun.
5. It was officially named Hoover Dam in 1931 however, government departments began to call it Boulder Dam after Hoover left office.
6. Hoover Dam has been called Hoover Dam, Boulder Dam, and Boulder Canyon Dam but it has performed its job effectively, no matter what it has been called.
7. Hoover Dam is 725 feet high it is 1,244 feet long.
8. Caution There is a dangerous undertow near the dam.
9. We reached Hoover Dam at 3:30 P.M. and went on the last tour of the day.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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## Semicolons and Colons

**More Practice**

### A. Using the Semicolon and the Colon

On the lines, write the word from each sentence that should be followed by a semicolon or colon. Then write the correct punctuation mark that should follow the word. If a semicolon or colon is needed within a numeral, write the entire numeral plus punctuation.

1. On February 25, 1986, Corazon Aquino became the President of the Philippines Ferdinand Marcos had resigned the presidency and fled the country. \_\_\_\_\_
2. China has the world's largest population however, the government strongly promotes a policy of one child per family. \_\_\_\_\_
3. It was Virginia Woolf who wrote these words "Anonymous was a woman." \_\_\_\_\_
4. My train for school leaves at 6 55 A.M. and arrives at 7 50 A.M. \_\_\_\_\_
5. The capital of California, the most highly populated state, is Sacramento and San Francisco and Los Angeles are California's most famous cities. \_\_\_\_\_
6. To Whom It May Concern I am writing to request a refund. \_\_\_\_\_
7. Postal workers deliver mail in all types of weather rain, sleet, snow, and hail. \_\_\_\_\_
8. Bruges, Belgium, has long been famous for its lace in fact, it is one of the few places in Belgium where lace is still made by hand. \_\_\_\_\_
9. Take all the rain gear we expect bad weather. \_\_\_\_\_

### B. Using the Semicolon and the Colon in Writing

Add semicolons and colons where they are needed in these paragraphs.

(1) Frostbite is dangerous the skin and tissue can actually freeze as a result of exposure to intense cold. (2) Frostbite can occur in many parts of the body it most often affects the ears, nose, fingers, and toes.

(3) In the early stages of frostbite, the skin appears red pain is often present. (4) As the condition develops, the following symptoms appear skin turns gray-white and the pain disappears at this stage the condition is easy to treat. (5) A person who has frostbitten hands should cover the exposed area with warm gloves then he or she should get out of the cold. (6) When the person is indoors, he or she should follow these rules remove all wet clothing, immerse the area in warm water, and cover the affected area loosely with dry clothes. (7) Warning The person should not warm the frostbitten area by sitting near a flame or radiator this heat might burn the skin.

# Semicolons and Colons

## *Application*

### A. Writing Sentences with Semicolons and Colons

For each item, write the sentence that is described in parentheses.

**EXAMPLE** (sentence that uses a semicolon to join the parts of a compound sentence without a coordinating conjunction)

*The plane was flying into a headwind; we arrived at the airport ten minutes behind schedule.*

- (sentence that uses a semicolon before a conjunctive adverb and a comma to join clauses in a compound sentence)

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- (sentence that uses a colon to introduce a long quotation)

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- (sentence that uses a colon to introduce a list of items)

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- (sentence that uses a semicolon to separate parts when commas appear within parts of a series)

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### B. Proofreading a News Article

The reporter who wrote this news article was in a great hurry. He omitted both semicolons and colons. Prepare the article for publishing by adding needed semicolons and colons.

Fire engines responded to a fire in a warehouse in the northwest part of the city, specifically the 1600 block of Lake Avenue, early this morning they found the blaze out of control upon their arrival. Immediately they took these precautions they kept gawkers far from the flames, they began hosing down the building, and they called the owner. This fact was ascertained earlier no one was in the building. The fire department called the departments of neighboring cities however, the blaze was uncontrollable despite the efforts of all the firefighters. Damages were said to be severe at least one million dollars' worth of merchandise had been stored in the building. Fire investigators will examine the site today they will look for signs of possible arson.