

Colons and Semi-Colons

Writing well is a lot more than just correct grammar, but it is an important element.

Do you know the difference between colons (:) and semi-colons (;)?

Here are the rules.

- Colons are used between the hour and minutes-8:15
- After the salutation of a business letter-Dear Madam:
- To introduce a list, examples, a series of statements, or a long quotation. The only trick here is that the part of the sentence that comes before the colon must be a complete sentence.
Correct-Jim took three courses last semester: Old Testament, Tillich, and CHATS.
Incorrect: My favorite foods are: spinach, ochre, and turnips.
- Semicolons are used between two clauses of a compound sentence when they are not connected by a conjunction.
Correct: It's going to snow this weekend; I need to get out the shovels.
Incorrect-It's going to snow this weekend; and I need to get out the shovels.
- Between independent clauses which are joined by a conjunctive adverb such as therefore, hence, however, nevertheless, accordingly, then, and thus.
Correct-I partied too hardy last night; consequently, I failed my Greek test.