



# Semicolons and Colons



Define the usage of semicolons and colons and correctly use them in sentences.

## Semicolons – ;

*Semicolons are used only to separate independent clauses (complete sentences).*

- ✗ The cat is tired; and meowing a lot.
- ✓ The cat is tired; he is also meowing a lot.
- ✗ The cat is tired; the Mongolian hordes are advancing upon the Empire.

## Colons – :

*Colons are used after independent clauses that are grammatically complete, but have unresolved ideas.*

- ✓ There can be only one explanation: the Joker had taken over the city. (Independent Clause)
- ✓ Only one group of people could be responsible: the Sultans of Swing. (Dependent Clause)
- ✓ I have three hobbies: snowboarding, woodworking, and skydiving. (List)

Decide whether a semicolon or a colon is more appropriate for the following sentences.

1. It was a dark and stormy night \_\_\_ the rain was pattering at the windows.
2. There was a banquet laid on the table \_\_\_ cream puffs, roast quail, asparagus, and caviar.
3. It's a matter of opinion who committed the crime \_\_\_ the butler or the cook.
4. The detective had solved the mystery \_\_\_ it was only a matter of time before the crook was revealed.
5. The lady of the house had but three fears \_\_\_ the howling of the wind, the depths of the sea, and the dark graveyard where no one ever went.
6. The butler grimaced \_\_\_ the cook heaved a sigh.
7. There could be only one solution left \_\_\_ the master had stolen the jewels himself.
8. The detective smirked as she walked away from the mansion \_\_\_ she had gotten away with it again.



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## Answer Sheet

1. It was a dark and stormy night ; the rain was pattering at the windows.
2. There was a banquet laid on the table : cream puffs, roast quail, asparagus, and caviar.
3. It's a matter of opinion who committed the crime : the butler or the cook.
4. The detective had solved the mystery ; it was only a matter of time before the crook was revealed.
5. The lady of the house had but three fears : the howls of the wind, the depths of the sea, and the dark graveyard where no one ever goes.
6. The butler grimaced ; the cook heaved a sigh.
7. There could be only one solution left : the master had stolen the jewels himself.
8. The detective smirked as she walked away from the mansion ; she had gotten away with it again.