

A dog howled, ~~braeking~~ the
stillness. Someone was behind me...

breaking →
comma →
ellipsis →
period ←

Colons and Semicolons

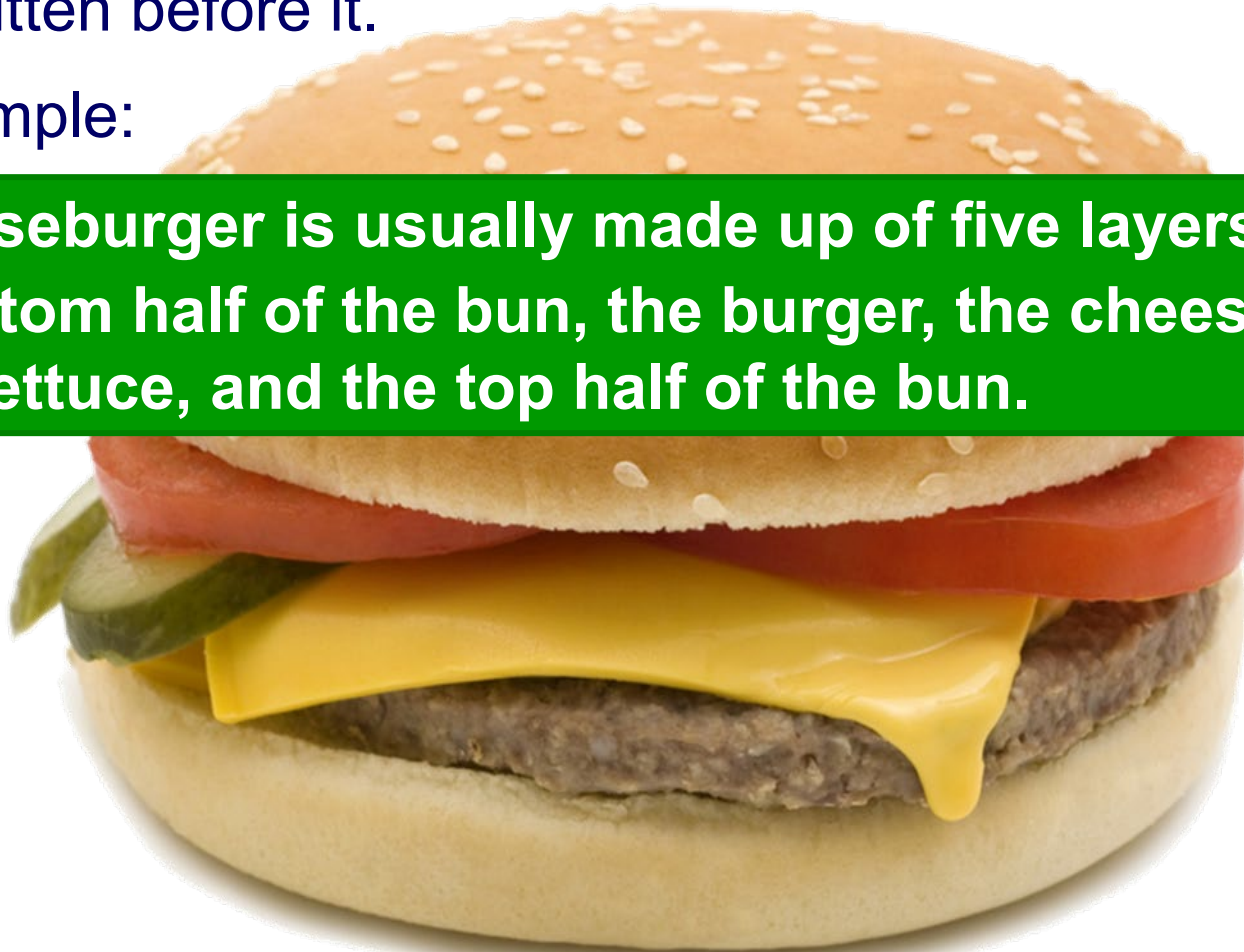


What is a colon?

When a **colon** (:) is used, it shows that the words that follow it are an explanation, example or list of what has been written before it.

For example:

A cheeseburger is usually made up of five layers: the bottom half of the bun, the burger, the cheese, some lettuce, and the top half of the bun.



Where do we put colons?

A colon should be placed after a complete sentence.

It can be followed by lots of words or just a few words that may or may not be in a complete sentence. For example:

There is only one thing I have to say to you: you are a pig!

I don't know what to do with my money: spend or save?

complete sentence

not a complete sentence

Colons are placed directly after the last word of the main idea and they are followed by one space only. They are **never** followed by either a hyphen (-) or a dash (—).



Where should the colons go?



Press on the place in each sentence where you think the colon should be. If you are correct, a colon will appear!

Chris had two thoughts about the movie long and boring.

There are so many things we could do go to the movies, go skating, go bowling or just stay in and watch DVDs.

There was only one verdict for the jury guilty as charged.

The fire destroyed many things in the house the furniture, the carpets and the curtains.

There was only one dessert in the world for Maddy cookie dough ice cream cake.



solve



Now write five sentences using colons to either explain a point, give an example or introduce a list.

What is a semicolon?

A **semicolon (;)** joins two **independent clauses** (complete sentences) into one longer sentence.

It is used to join clauses that are too closely related to be separated by a period. Semicolons can replace **conjunctions** such as *and* or *but*.



**Eating chocolate in moderation is fine;
eating chocolate to excess is bad.**

The semicolon joins the statements about chocolate into one sentence which acts like a warning: eating a little chocolate is okay but beware of eating too much. The second clause is directly related to the first clause.

Here are some more examples of sentences with semicolons.

Notice that the sets of words on either side of the semicolon are complete sentences that make sense on their own.

1. **My dad's coming home tonight; he's been away on business for two weeks.**
2. **It was the best of times; it was the worst of times.**
3. **My little brother always sleeps with the light on; he's afraid of the dark.**
4. **I love *Taylor Swift*; she's great!**
5. **Sarah didn't like the movie; Tim really enjoyed it.**



Is the semicolon used correctly?



Where should the semicolons go?



Write five sentences using semicolons to link two sentences that are closely related.

Using semicolons in a complex list

A semicolon can be used to separate items in a long and complicated list. Read the sentence below that contains commas only to separate the items in the list.

There were four people at the meeting: Mike, the class president; Jenny, the vice president; Roberto, the class treasurer and Mrs. Foster, the principal.



What problem is created by only using commas?

It looks like there were seven people at the meeting, not four.

Read the sentence again, this time with semicolons.

How do the semicolons make the meaning clear?

Using semicolons in a complex list



Drag the punctuation marks to the correct places to punctuate this piece of text.

It was an eerie night __ dark __ cold and misty __ A dog howled somewhere on the moor __ breaking the stillness __ I felt scared __ I shivered __ I walked slowly towards the castle __ its bulk dominated the hilltop __ After a few minutes of walking __ I began to feel warmer __ I approached the castle __ it looked gothic and uninviting __ I began looking for an entrance but suddenly I froze __ someone was behind me...

. . , . . , . ; . ; : : , ;



solve

