

SEMICOLONS & COLONS



A *semicolon* is strong enough to join two independent clauses. It is more pronounced than that indicated by a comma and a coordinating conjunction.

A *colon* indicates the introduction of a quotation or list of items, or the separation of two independent clauses where the second expands the first.

Semicolons

- ☑ **DO** put semicolons outside of closing quotation marks.
- ☑ **DO** place a semicolon before an adverbial conjunction between two independent clauses.
- ⊙ **DO NOT** use a semicolon between a dependent clause and an independent clause.
- ⊙ **DO NOT** use a semicolon to introduce a list of items; instead, use a colon.
- ⊙ **DO NOT** use a semicolon next to dashes.

Colons

With an appositive, list, or question:

- ☑ **DO** use when listing items after an independent clause.
- ☑ **DO** use after the words “the following” and “as follows” at the end of independent clauses.
- ☑ **DO** use if an incomplete sentence introduces a direct quotation.
- ⊙ **DO NOT** use after an incomplete sentence.
- ⊙ **DO NOT** use after “such as,” “like,” or “including.”

Between sentences:

- ☑ When using a sentence as an introduction to another sentence, **DO** use a colon in between them.
- ⊙ **DO NOT** use when a direct object consists of a series or list of items.
- ⊙ **DO NOT** use between a dependent clause and an independent clause.

Conventional formats:

- ☑ Between a title and subtitle
- ☑ Between Bible chapters and verses
- ☑ After words in memo headings
- ☑ After formal letter openings