**Colon Vs Semicolon: English Grammar**

Shraddha B.

You might be getting confused as to when and how to use semicolon and colon, when to use them and what is the basic difference between a semicolon and a colon. So let's clear up this confusion by studying various examples and it's time to clear up some confusion.

**When Do We Use Semicolons - To Separate Things and Add Variety to Sentences**

We are aware about the general concept of semicolons is that they separate things. Most commonly, they are used to separate two main clauses in the sentences that are closely related to each other but that could stand on their own as sentences if you wanted them to.

Now let’s see an example -"The temperature of the surrounding was below zero; Jincy wondered if she would freeze to death." These are the two parts of that long sentence that are separated by a semicolon but could be sentences on their own if you put a period between them. Like we can say- “The temperature of the surrounding was below zero.” “Jincy wondered if she would free to death.”

**Semicolons Versus Colons**

People generally gets confused as to what is the difference between using a semicolon and a colon. Let’s see what are some of the varied differences between semicolon and a colon. The first difference is that the purpose of a colon is to introduce or define something. For example, you could write, “Jincy just checked the temperature of the surrounding: it was -2 degrees.” We can see here that the differences are quite subtle, but using a colon in that sentence instead of a semicolon is better form of writing because the second clause (the temperature) strongly relates back to the first clause (Jincy checking the temperature).

The second major difference between using a colon and a semicolon is that when you are joining things, you should use a semicolon to join things of equal weight or significance, whereas you can use a colon to join things of equal or unequal significance. For example, you can choose to use either a semicolon or a colon to join two main clauses, but you should only use a colon to join a main clause with a noun. Let’s see this example to understand the usage: "Jincy missed only one friend: Mehek." You couldn't use a semicolon in that sentence because the two parts are unequal.

**Colons Used in Sentences**

* There are two choices for you at this time: run away or fight.
* We knew who would win the game this time: the Eagles
* He always wanted to see three cities in Italy: Rome, Florence and Venice
* Always Remember: Two can play at that game.
* Whenever we got out she kept repeating: "I really want that car!"
* Barry wished to know why I didn't respond to his text: I hadn't received it.
* Here are three states that begin with letter M: Michigan, Mississippi and Maine.
* She can come pick me up now: I am feeling much better.
* Never forget this advice: Think before you speak.

**Semicolons in Sentences**

* Brother is going bald; his hair is getting thinner and thinner.
* I really like chicken, with mushroom sauce; pasta, with Alfredo sauce; and salad, with French dressing.
* You should keep a check on your eating habits; you will have to go on a diet.
* You need new brakes for this car; otherwise you may not be able to stop in time.

With all these examples and conceptual understanding you’ll definitely know the better usage of semicolon and colon in a sentence.