

# The Writing Center    Washtenaw Community College

## Colon

Use a colon after an independent clause that introduces a list. An independent clause is a word group that can stand alone as a sentence.

Ex.: The students reviewed the major punctuation marks: the period, the comma, the colon, the semicolon, and the apostrophe.

Use a colon after an independent clause that introduces a quotation.

Ex.: The words of the old philosopher echoed in her mind: “You cannot step into the same river twice.”

Use a colon between two independent clauses if the second clause summarizes or explains the first.

Ex.: The reason for her success was clear: she worked hard and remained patient.

Observe these conventional uses of the colon

After the salutation in a business letter

Ex.: Dear Ms. Jovanovich:

Between hours and minutes in the numeral form of times of the day

Ex.: Class starts at 1:30.

Between the numerals of a ratio

Ex.: The student-to-teacher ration was 28:1.