Mastering Colons and Semicolons with Max and Kit

Learning objective: To understand and correctly apply colons and semicolons to link independent clauses and introduce lists, as per Year 6 SPaG requirements.

Read the front of the flashcard to test your knowledge. Flip to the back to check if your definition or application is correct. Use these to practise your punctuation skills!

What is the primary function of a colon (:)?

A colon is used to introduce a list, a quote, or an explanation/expansion of the independent clause that came before it.

When using a colon for a list, what must come before it?

A colon must follow a complete sentence (an independent clause).

Max the monkey wants to list his fruit. Correct this sentence: Max bought three items: bananas, apples and grapes.

The sentence is already correct! The colon follows a complete clause to introduce the list.

What is the primary function of a semicolon (;)?

A semicolon is used to link two independent clauses that are closely related in meaning without using a conjunction.

True or False: Both sides of a semicolon must be able to stand alone as complete sentences.

True. A semicolon connects two independent clauses.

Kit the fox wants to join two sentences. Fix this: Kit loves computing; he enjoys coding puzzles.

The sentence is correct. Both 'Kit loves computing' and 'he enjoys coding puzzles' are independent clauses.

Fill in the blank: Use a _____ to introduce a dramatic explanation of a previous statement.

Colon.

Why should you avoid using a semicolon before 'and', 'but', or 'or'?

Because those words are coordinating conjunctions, which usually take a comma, not a semicolon.

Is this correct? 'Pip loves books; reading is fun.'

Yes, both parts are independent clauses and are closely related in theme.

Complete the sentence using a colon: Zara had three favourite colours: _____.

Any three colours (e.g., Zara had three favourite colours: blue, green and gold.)

Fix the punctuation: Nova looked at the stars she felt amazed.

Nova looked at the stars; she felt amazed. (Or: Nova looked at the stars: she felt amazed.)

How long is the pause represented by a semicolon?

A semicolon represents a pause longer than a comma but shorter than a full stop.