PUNCTUATION

Colons (:)

- Used
  - When introducing lists
    - Ex: The University of Alabama system has locations in three different Alabama cities: Tuscaloosa, Birmingham, and Huntsville.
  - Before noun/noun phrases
    - Ex: UAH has two main colors in its logo: blue and white.
  - When introducing a quote
    - Ex: The presenter ended with a quote from Franklin D. Roosevelt: "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself".
  - After a complete sentence to provide examples
    - Ex: I wore one of my favorite necklaces to the dance last night: I could see it shimmering in the moonlight all night long.

Be sure to capitalize the first word after a colon if it is a proper noun or after a complete sentence!

- Not used
  - When separating "a noun from its verb, a verb from its object or subject complement, a preposition from its object, or a subject from its predicate" (O'Reilly, 2023).
    - Ex: My three favorite study spots on campus are: the library, the coffee shop, and the picnic tables.
    - Ex: After I finish my finals, I want to go to: my favorite restaurant, an ice cream shop, and Target.
  - After the words "especially" or "including", as a colon replaces these words.
  - If you have two independent clauses to connect.

Semicolons (;)

- Used
  - When you have two complete sentences, but no conjunction to connect them.
    - Ex: I hope you finished your homework last night; It was worth 10% of our grade!
  - Before words that introduce a grouping of items, such as "i.e.", "namely", or "for

For more information, make an appointment for your course with one of our content tutors. All appointments are available in-person at the Student Success Center, located in the Library, or online.

References:
O'Reilly, Anthony (2023, April 25). When to Use a Colon, With Examples. Retrieved fromhttps://www.grammarly.com/blog/colon-2/

example". Be sure to use a comma after the introductory word!

- ■ Ex: I love lots of different types of pizza with toppings; namely, buffalo chicken pizza and margarita pizza.
  - ○ When you have a series of items that are all separated by commas.
    - ■ Ex: I have lived in Portland, Oregon; Nashville, Tennessee; and Dallas, Texas.
- Not used
  - ○ When your clauses are not complete sentences, and need a comma.
    - ■ Ex: I like to go to work, but only during the day.
  - ○ Between an independent and a dependent clause
    - ■ Ex: James is a very kind employee; that new employee is not.

Hyphens (-)

- Used to connect two words.
  - ○ Ex. He's very well-known.
  - ○ Ex. The course is very fast-paced.

Em dashes (--)

- Used to indicate a change in sentence structure and/or draw your reader's attention to asides or additional information.
  - ○ They can be used in a similar way to colons, semicolons, or parentheses. However, since they are used to add emphasis, they should be used sparingly.
    - ■ Ex. I didn't expect the test to be so difficult–I should've studied last night!
    - ■ Ex. My professor–who I had last semester– said it was good to see me again.

Remember: hyphens connect, em dashes separate!

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