**Grammar Lesson 2: Hyphens, Colons, and Semicolons,**

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Notes taken from http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/576/01/r

**Hyphens**

Two words brought together as a compound may be written separately, written as one word, or connected by hyphens. For example, three modern dictionaries all have the same listings for the following compounds:

hair stylist hairsplitter hair-raiser

Another modern dictionary, however, lists hairstylist, not hair stylist. Compounding is obviously in a state of flux, and authorities do not always agree in all cases, but the uses of the hyphen offered here are generally agreed upon.

Use a hyphen to join two or more words serving as a single adjective before a noun:

a one-way street  
chocolate-covered peanuts  
well-known author

Use a hyphen with compound numbers:

forty-six sixty-three  
Our much-loved teacher was sixty-three years old.

Use a hyphen to avoid confusion or an awkward combination of letters:

re-sign a petition (vs. resign from a job)  
semi-independent (but semiconscious)  
shell-like (but childlikeUse a hyphen with the prefixes ex- (meaning former), self-, all-; with the suffix -elect; between a prefix and a capitalized word; and with figures or letters:

ex-husband  
self-assured  
mid-September  
all-inclusive  
mayor-elect  
anti-American  
T-shirt  
pre-Civil War  
mid-1980s

Use a hyphen to divide words at the end of a line if necessary, and make the break only between syllables:

pref-er-ence sell-ing in-di-vid-u-al-ist

For line breaks, divide already-hyphenated words only at the hyphen:

mass-  
produced  
self-  
conscious

For line breaks in words ending in -ing, if a single final consonant in the root word is doubled before the suffix, hyphenate between the consonants; otherwise, hyphenate at the suffix itself:

plan-ning  
run-ning  
driv-ing  
call-ing

**Colons**

The following rules and examples will help you know when and where to use the colon as a punctuation mark.

* Use a colon to signal the reader that a series of words, phrases, or clauses follows a complete sentence.

|  |
| --- |
| The baseball coach claimed that the team's success stemmed from four things**:** consistent hitting, solid pitching, good fielding, and excellent teamwork.  The Greasy Spoon restaurant had several house specialties**:** a hot turkey sandwich, a roast pork dinner, a walleye platter, and a barbecued chicken wing basket. |

* Use a colon to signal the reader that a second complete sentence explains a closely related preceding sentence.

|  |
| --- |
| The supervisor's remark was straight to the point**:** I won't tolerate workers who show up late.  Religion and politics can be sensitive subjects**:** many people hold opinionated views and are easily offended by other peoples' remarks. |

* Use a colon to signal the reader that a name or description follows a complete sentence when you want to put a lot of emphasis on that item.

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| --- |
| The local anglers had a nickname for the large muskie that had cruised the lake's shoreline for years without being caught**:** Old Mossback.  The preoccupied burglar didn't notice who was standing right behind him**:** a smiling police officer. |

* Use a colon to introduce a long quotation after a complete sentence.

|  |
| --- |
| In his book, *Language is Sermonic,* rhetorician Richard Weaver described how language may influence us**:**  Sophistications of theory cannot obscure the truth that there are but three ways for language to affect us. It can move us toward what is good; it can move us toward what is evil; or it can, in hypothetical third place, fail to move us at all. (60) |

* Colons are also used...

...to separate titles and subtitles:

Richard Nixon**:** The Tarnished President

...to express time:

The accident occurred at approximately 1**:**45 p.m. on Tuesday.

...to cite a law or Biblical passage:

According to Minnesota statute 1**:**49**:**002, it is unlawful to feed licorice or peanut butter to goats.

...to end a salutation:

Dear Rachel**:**

...to separate the place of publication and the publisher in a bibliographic entry:

West, Gerald. How to Write Best Sellers. New York**:** Henry

James Publishing, 1973.

**Conjunctive Adverbs**

accordingly, furthermore, moreover, similarly,

also, hence, namely, still,

anyway, however, nevertheless, then,

besides, incidentally, next, thereafter,

certainly, indeed, nonetheless, therefore,

consequently, instead, now, thus,

finally, likewise, otherwise, undoubtedly,

further, meanwhile.

**Semicolons** from http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/Semicolons.html

**Connect closely related ideas**

* Link two [independent clauses](JavaScript:openPopWin(%22indclause.html%22,%20400,%20320,%20%22%22,%2025,%2025)) to connect closely related ideas

Some people write with a word processor**;** others write with a pen or pencil.

* Link clauses connected by [conjunctive adverbs](JavaScript:openPopWin(%22conjadv_popup.html%22,%20400,%20280,%20%22%22,%2025,%2025)) or [transitional phrases](JavaScript:openPopWin(%22transphrase.html%22,%20400,%20300,%20%22%22,%2025,%2025)) to connect closely related ideas

But however they choose to write, people are allowed to make their own decisions**;** as a result, many people swear by their writing methods.

* Link lists where the items contain commas to avoid confusion between list items

There are basically two ways to write: with a pen or pencil, which is inexpensive and easily accessible**;** or by computer and printer, which is more expensive but quick and neat.

* Link lengthy clauses or clauses with commas to avoid confusion between clauses

Some people write with a word processor, typewriter, or a computer**;** but others, for different reasons, choose to write with a pen or pencil.

**Rules for Using Semicolons**

* A semicolon is most commonly used to link (in a single sentence) two [independent clauses](JavaScript:openPopWin(%22indclause.html%22,%20400,%20320,%20%22%22,%2025,%2025)) that are closely related in thought.

When a semicolon is used to join two or more ideas (parts) in a sentence, those ideas are then given equal position or rank.

Some people write with a word processor**;** others write with a pen or pencil.

* Use a semicolon between two [independent clauses](JavaScript:openPopWin(%22indclause.html%22,%20400,%20320,%20%22%22,%2025,%2025)) that are connected by [conjunctive adverbs](JavaScript:openPopWin() or [transitional phrases](JavaScript:openPopWin(%22transphrase.html%22,%20400,%20300,%20%22%22,%2025,%2025)).

But however they choose to write, people are allowed to make their own decisions**;** as a result, many people swear by their writing methods.

* Use a semicolon between items in a list or series if any of the items contain commas.

There are basically two ways to write: with a pen or pencil, which is inexpensive and easily accessible**;** or by computer and printer, which is more expensive but quick and neat.

* Use a semicolon between [independent clauses](JavaScript:openPopWin(%22indclause.html%22,%20400,%20320,%20%22%22,%2025,%2025)) joined by a [coordinating conjunction](JavaScript:openPopWin(%22coordconj_popup.html%22,%20400,%20200,%20%22%22,%2025,%2025)) if the clauses are already punctuated with commas or if the clauses are lengthy.

Some people write with a word processor, typewriter, or a computer**;** but others, for different reasons, choose to write with a pen or pencil.

**Putting it together:**

**A. How does Edgar Allan Poe utilize the hyphen in the following passage from “Tell-Tale Heart” to create a suspenseful mood?**

Now this is the point. You fancy me mad. Madmen know nothing. But you should have seen me. You should have seen how wisely I proceeded - with what caution - with what foresight - with what dissimulation I went to work! I was never kinder to the old man than during the whole week before I killed him. And every night, about midnight, I turned the latch of his door and opened it - oh so gently! And then, when I had made an opening sufficient for my head, I put in a dark lantern, all closed, closed, that no light shone out, and then I thrust in my head. Oh, you would have laughed to see how cunningly I thrust it in! I moved it slowly - very, very slowly, so that I might not disturb the old man's sleep.

**B. Write four sentences describing an accident. Include one sentence which uses a colon, one sentence which uses a semicolon, and one sentence which uses a conjunctive adverb.**