

## Using colons

*Consider the punctuation of the following two independent clauses.*

1. For years the Romans ignored the feelings of slaves. The repercussion of this course of action was made clear by Spartacus.

*{This first example separates the clauses into two sentences. They are closely related because of proximity, they come one after the other, and by sense.}*

2. For years the Romans ignored the feelings of slaves, and the repercussion of this course of action was made clear by Spartacus.

*{This example joins the clauses with the simplest of coordinating conjunctions, "and." The relationship between the clauses is closer than in the first example; they are now joined in one sentence.}*

3. For years the Romans ignored the feelings of slaves; the repercussion of this course of action was made clear by Spartacus. *{As in example two, the independent clauses have been joined into one sentence. Here a semicolon joins the ideas and suggests but does not comment on a close logical relationship between the two clauses.}*

4. For years the Romans ignored the feelings of slaves: the repercussion of this course of action was made clear by Spartacus. *{Here a colon joins the two ideas. When compared with a semicolon, the colon suggests more significance; it promises that the second clause will explain or amplify the first.}*

### Examples of colon use

1. The bookbinder counted his tools: 3 sewing needles, 1 polishing iron, 6 decorative rolls, 2 paring knives and 1 gold foil knife.
2. The book was a splendid wreck: its once bright pages were faded and torn; the sophisticated sewing had broken down; and the ornate back cover was missing.
3. The owner had one question: what would it cost to fix it?