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Grammer Lee

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**“Your grammar is a reflection of your image.
Good or bad, you have made an impression.
And like all impressions, you are in total control.”**

JEFFREY GITOMER, AUTHOR

LESSON 8

Colons vs. Semicolons

What is a Colon?

A colon, which resembles two vertical periods, is typically used to introduce a sentence that clarifies, explains or elaborates on the sentence that came before it.

Capitalize the first word after a colon only if it is a proper noun or the start of a complete sentence.

EXAMPLE:

He promised this: The company will make good on all the losses.

There were three considerations: expense, time and feasibility.

ALSO USE COLONS FOR:

Ratios: The odds of winning are 3:1.

Time: The movie starts at 7:45 p.m.

What is a Semicolon?

A semicolon, which resembles a dot over a comma, is used to indicate a “greater separation of thought and information than a comma can convey but less than the separation that a period implies.”

EXAMPLE:

Sunny loves eating vanilla ice cream; it was her favorite flavor when she was a kid.

ALSO USE A SEMICOLON TO SEPARATE ITEMS IN A LIST WITH COMMAS:

The train travels to Miami, Florida; Atlanta, Georgia; and Birmingham, Alabama.

Colons and semicolons are used to connect related sentences.

AN EXAMPLE OF EACH:

- There was only one way to defeat the dragon: we needed a magic sword.
- The dragon was a fearsome beast; it was nearly undefeatable.

In the first example, the **colon** connects the first sentence to a second sentence that directly clarifies it. The second sentence provides the answer to the problem presented in the first sentence.

In the second example, the **semicolon** simply connects two related sentences that are discussing the same subject. Both of these sentences are about the strength of the dragon, but neither one is more significant than the other.

Commonly Confused Words

Its vs. It's

Its = Possessive form of “it”

EXAMPLE:

The tree lost its leaves.

The company changed its policy.

It's = “It is” or “It has”

EXAMPLE:

It's up to you. (It is up to you.)

It's been a long time. (It has been a long time.)

Oops in the Wild

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Thank You!