

Colons

A **colon** may be used to introduce a list or an important point. Colons are also used in business letters and between the numbers in time.

596.1 To Introduce Lists

Use a colon to introduce a list. The colon usually comes after words describing the subject of the list (as in the first example below) or after summary words, such as *the following* or *these things*. Do not use a colon after a verb or preposition.

Certain items are still difficult to recycle: foam cups, car tires, and toxic chemicals.

To conserve water, you should do the following three things: fix drippy faucets, install a low-flow showerhead, and turn the water off while brushing your teeth.

Incorrect: To conserve water, you should: install a low-flow showerhead, turn the water off while brushing your teeth, and fix drippy faucets.

596.2 To Introduce Sentences

A colon may be used to introduce a sentence, a question, or a quotation.

This is why air pollution is bad: We are sacrificing our health and the health of all other life on the planet.

Answer this question for me: Why aren't more people concerned about global warming?

Joaquin shared this with us: "Iceland is the world's leader in the use of renewable energy."

596.3 After Salutations

A colon may be used after the salutation of a business letter.

Dear Ms. Manners: Dear Dr. Warmle: Dear Professor Potter:
Dear Captain Elliot: Dear Senator:

596.4 For Emphasis

Use a colon to emphasize a word or phrase.

The newest alternative energy is also the most common element on earth: hydrogen.

Here's one thing that can help save energy: a programmable thermostat.

596.5 Between Numbers in Time

Use a colon between the parts of a number that indicates time.

My thermostat automatically sets my heat to 60 degrees between 11:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m.

Colons



The following letter needs colons placed correctly. Write the line number and the words or numbers that need colons. Then add the colons.

1 March 9, 2005

2 JoAnne White Cloud

3 1315 Wells Road

4 Colfax, WA 99201

5 Dear Ms. White Cloud

6 The Colfax Junior Heritage Club would like you to be the
7 guest speaker at our next meeting on April 6. During the last three
8 months, we have been studying the goals of the Spokane Tribe
9 independence, honesty, and tradition. These goals have inspired
10 many of us with Native American roots.

11 We meet in the large lecture hall at the community center.
12 The meeting will begin at 730 p.m. and end at about 900 p.m.
13 Here is our plan for the evening a short business meeting, your
14 presentation, time for questions, and refreshments.

15 Let me add one final thought Our club's goal is "peace through
16 understanding," and your visit could help us all to learn more about
17 our common history. I hope you will be able to join us in April.

18 Sincerely,

19 Carolyn Mose

Next Step: Write a note to a friend. Ask him or her to meet you at a certain time and place. Include colons after the salutation, between numbers in a time, and to introduce a list.