Punctuation at Mission Control

Read a model text and track how colons introduce details and exact words.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-10.2b "Use a colon to introduce a list or quotation."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each colon in the passage. Write L above a colon that introduces a list and Q above a colon that introduces a quotation.

Apollo 11: Clear Words Under Pressure

1 At 20:17 UTC on July 20, 1969, NASA's Mission Control in Houston received a tense message from Apollo 11: "The Eagle has landed." The quotation came after Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin guided the lunar module Eagle toward the Moon while Michael Collins remained in orbit. Controllers had tracked fuel, communication, and the landing site during the final minutes. Their work depended on three essentials: precise data, calm decisions, and clear language. The room did not erupt at once. Flight director Gene Kranz waited for confirmation, then the controllers began to celebrate a landing that marked the first time people had reached the lunar surface.

2 A colon helped Mission Control display information quickly on checklists and console screens. Before a major decision, teams compared several readings: oxygen level, electrical power, and spacecraft position. They also listened closely to the crew's reports. During the landing, computer alarms appeared because the guidance computer was busy processing too many tasks. Armstrong gave a short report to Mission Control: "Houston, Tranquility Base here. The Eagle has landed." His words gave the controllers the confirmation they needed. The exact report preserved the astronaut's language for people on Earth. In high-pressure work, punctuation can help readers see how details and voices belong together.

3 Years later, engineers studied Apollo 11 to improve later missions. They examined records from the spacecraft, radio transcripts, and medical reports. One report listed the crew members: Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin, and Michael Collins. Historians also preserve words spoken during important events. During the mission, Aldrin offered this description of the Moon: "Magnificent desolation." The quotation records his point of view, while the list identifies the three people assigned to the mission. Together, these punctuation choices help a reader separate supporting details from a speaker's exact language. They also make a complex historical account easier to scan.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. In paragraph 1, copy the three essentials introduced by a colon.

2. What type of information does the colon introduce after "Apollo 11" in paragraph 1?

3. In paragraph 2, copy the complete clause that comes before the colon introducing Armstrong's exact words.

4. In paragraph 3, copy the sentence that uses a colon to introduce a list of crew members.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write two sentences about an event, activity, or subject you know well. In the first sentence, use a colon to introduce a list of three details. In the second sentence, use a colon to introduce a short quotation.

ANSWER KEY

Punctuation at Mission Control

HIGH SCHOOL · L.9-10.2b

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline each colon in the passage. Write L above a colon that introduces a list and Q above a colon that introduces a quotation. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	In paragraph 1, copy the three essentials introduced by a colon.	**precise data, calm decisions, and clear language**
2	What type of information does the colon introduce after "Apollo 11" in paragraph 1?	**A quotation, "The Eagle has landed."**
3	In paragraph 2, copy the complete clause that comes before the colon introducing Armstrong's exact words.	**Armstrong gave a short report to Mission Control**
4	In paragraph 3, copy the sentence that uses a colon to introduce a list of crew members.	**One report listed the crew members: Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin, and Michael Collins.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Our robotics club needs three items for the competition: batteries, tools, and a laptop. Before practice, our captain said: "Check every connection."

Accept correctly placed colons after complete clauses. The first student sentence should introduce a list, and the second should introduce exact quoted words.