

Punctuation With Purpose

See how colons and semicolons clarify a model text.

ELA.10.C.3 "Following Conventions"

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle each colon and underline each semicolon. In the margin, write what follows each mark, a list or a complete clause, to see how punctuation organizes connected ideas.

The Radio's Second Life

- ① On Saturday, volunteers at the Riverton Repair Café gathered around a 1950s tabletop radio. Its walnut case was scratched, and its cloth speaker cover had torn, but the device still mattered to its owner. Maya Chen, a tenth-grade student, had found it in her grandfather's attic. She brought three items to the workshop: the radio, a handwritten station log, and a photograph of her grandfather beside the same set. The objects suggested a story about evenings when neighbors listened together before television became common in many homes.
- ② At the café, an electrician tested the radio's power cord and replaced a brittle wire. The tuning dial moved again; however, the speaker produced only a faint hum. Maya recorded the repair steps in a notebook so that she could explain them at school. Her final display would include a clear sequence: inspect the case, test the electrical parts, replace damaged materials, and document each change. Careful punctuation helped her organize the instructions for visitors who had never repaired a radio in a public workshop.
- ③ During the school exhibition, Maya placed a small sign beside the radio. It gave visitors two choices: turn the dial gently or read the station log. She also added a warning about safety because old electronics can contain damaged wiring. The radio was not connected to an outlet; instead, a battery-powered audio clip played a recording of a broadcast from the period. By combining the repaired object with evidence from her family, Maya showed that technology can preserve personal history as well as sound for future visitors.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

1 What does the colon after “workshop” introduce in the first paragraph?

2 Why is a semicolon used after “again” in the second paragraph?

3 How does the colon after “clear sequence” help the reader?

4 What relationship does the semicolon before “instead” show in the third paragraph?

3 YOUR TURN Your own words

Write three sentences for a museum label about an object or a small exhibit. Use one colon to introduce a list and one semicolon to join two closely related complete sentences.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Circle each colon and underline each semicolon. In the margin, write what follows each mark, a list or a complete clause, to see how punctuation organizes connected ideas. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What does the colon after “workshop” introduce in the first paragraph?	It introduces a list of three items: the radio, a handwritten station log, and a photograph.
2	Why is a semicolon used after “again” in the second paragraph?	It joins two complete, closely related clauses about the tuning dial moving and the speaker producing a hum.
3	How does the colon after “clear sequence” help the reader?	It introduces the list of repair steps.
4	What relationship does the semicolon before “instead” show in the third paragraph?	It shows a contrast between the radio not being connected to an outlet and an audio clip playing instead.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

For our museum label, I chose three artifacts: a compass, a map, and a logbook. The compass pointed north; the map showed the route. Together, they explain how travelers prepared for a long journey.

Accept answers that explain that a colon introduces a list and a semicolon joins complete, closely related clauses. The passage contains three colons and two semicolons; accept equivalent descriptions of the contrast marked by instead.