USING COLONS

In writing, colons (:) are used:
• To extend a sentence to expand on something previously mentioned in the sentence
• After an introduction
• In references, times, and titles
• With quotations

USING COLONS TO EXTEND A SENTENCE

A colon is the equivalent to using an equal sign in mathematics. The information on the left of the colon equals the information on the right side. Usually, the information on the right is an expansion of whatever is mentioned on the left.

Example: I am looking for just one personal trait in a new employee: discipline.

USING COLONS AFTER INTRODUCTIONS

A colon can be used after an introduction. The wording to the left of the colon introduces the text that follows on the right.

Example: I have seen the following in my friend’s apartment: ants, a cockroach, and a rat.

USING COLONS IN REFERENCES AND TIMES

Colons can be used to divide the parts of references, titles, and times in writing.

Examples: Read Genesis 1:1 before the 7:30 p.m. bible study class begins.

My article, titled “Transfer student success: The factors that influence success and retention in community college transfer students’ transition to the university” was accepted for publication.

USING COLONS WITH QUOTATION MARKS

Colons can be used to introduce quotations to give the quote more emphasis and demonstrate its importance to the text.

Example: He said: "Curiosity killed the cat, but for a while I was a suspect."