Semicolons & Colons

Semicolons

1. Semicolons can be used by themselves to connect two independent clauses.

   - The thunder boomed; the rain began.
   - Lynette has a 4.00 GPA; she hopes to get a scholarship.

2. Generally, semicolons are followed by a transitional expression, which is followed by a comma.

   - This book is very old; unfortunately, it is not worth very much.
   - Tyrone's car gets very poor gas mileage; therefore, he doesn't drive it very often.

   > **Do not use a semicolon before for, and, not, but, or, yet, so (instead use a comma)**

3. Use a semicolon to separate items in a list if any of the items already contain commas.

   - My teacher has lived in Denver, Colorado; Boise, Idaho; Chicago, Illinois; and San Diego, California.
   - The company will be represented by Marissa Jones, director of finance; James Lincoln, director of manufacturing; and Ann Jones, director of research.

Colons

1. Use a colon when it is preceded by a complete sentence to introduce an explanation, example appositive, or list.

   - You must do one thing to win the lottery: buy a ticket.
   - The poem's structure reveals the poet's message: love has changed her life.
   - I need more supplies: pencils, pen, paper, and erasers.

2. Colons are also used after the salutation in business letters.
   - Dear Ms. Baker:

3. Use a colon to introduce a long quotation.

   Russell reminds us that worry over servants forgetting their "place" cannot be untangled from fear about the theatre in general:
   > Anxieties surrounding the capacity of the servant class to transcend social origins by adopting the manners and dress of their masters can be linked with suspicions of acting in contemporary anti-theatrical discourse; like the theatre, service represented a potential emancipator arena for a person of the lower classes, a sphere in which old identities could be cast off and new ones taken on. ("Keeping Place")