Colon

1. Use a colon after an independent clause that introduces a list. An independent clause is a word group that can stand alone as a sentence.

   The students reviewed the major punctuation marks: the period, the comma, the colon, the semicolon, and the apostrophe.

2. Use a colon after an independent clause that introduces a quotation.

   The words of the old philosopher echoed in her mind: “You cannot step into the same river twice.”

3. Use a colon between two independent clauses if the second clause summarizes or explains the first.

   The reason for her success was clear: she worked hard and remained patient.

4. Observe these conventional uses of the colon

   ♦ After the salutation in a business letter
     Dear Ms. Jovanovich:
   ♦ Between hours and minutes in the numeral form of times of the day
     Class starts at 1:30.
   ♦ Between the numerals of a ratio
     The student-to-teacher ratio was 28:1.