Colons

1. Focus

Explain Using Colons

Say: Colons have many different uses. Colons usually signal that more information follows. One of the uses of colons is to introduce a piece of information. Colons can take the place of periods, in some cases, to make writing more interesting. Unlike periods, colons show how two statements relate to each other.

Display the example text on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources.

Example Text

The basic gameplay of soccer is simple: Players kick the ball up and down a large field.

Model Using Colons

Display the modeling text on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources and read it aloud to students.

Modeling Text

Let’s start with the field: It’s a rectangle 100 yards wide and 130 yards long divided by a halfway line.

Objectives

In this mini-lesson, students will:
• Identify colons used in sentences.
• Practice using colons in sentences.

Preparation

Materials Needed
• Chart paper and markers
• Using Colons (BLM 10)
• Interactive whiteboard resources

Advanced Preparation

If you will not be using the interactive whiteboard resources, copy the example text, the modeling text, and the practice text (without the colons) onto chart paper prior to the mini-lesson.
2. Rehearse

Practice Using Colons

Display the practice text (without the colons) on chart paper or use the interactive whiteboard resources.

Ask students to work with a partner to decide where to insert a colon in each sentence. (Students do not need to copy the sentences.)

1. After a sleepless night, the senator made her decision: She would not seek re-election.
2. Music is more than an arrangement of sounds: It is an expression of deep feeling.
3. There is a reason for a drop in attendance at NBA games this season: There was no superstar to take the place of the popular team leader.

Practice Text

If your class includes English learners or other students who need support, use “Strategies to Support ELs.”

Share Sentences with Correct Placement of Colons

Invite volunteers to come to the chart or the interactive whiteboard and insert colons where needed in each sentence. Ask students why a colon works better than a period in these sentences. Discuss their choices as a class.

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: Remember to use colons in your writing when you want to signal that more information about a statement is coming. Colons can take the place of periods, in some cases, to make writing more interesting.

If you would like to give students additional practice using colons in sentences, have them complete BLM 10.

4. Share

Bring students together. Invite volunteers to share their answers to BLM 10. Use students’ answers to provide corrective feedback.

Strategies to Support ELs

Beginning
The colon is used infrequently in most languages. Some of your ELs might have had few chances to see colons used in English. This concept may be too difficult for beginners. You might want to work one on one with students and use simple sentences to demonstrate the use of the colon. Or you may just want to help reinforce the vocabulary of the mentor text, using the picture on page 7.

Intermediate and Advanced
Pair these students with fluent English speakers to identify when colons can be used in place of a period to introduce more information. Be sure that the students understand the meaning of the practice sentences before they complete the activity.

Pair students with fluent English speakers to complete BLM 10.