Bracken Business Communications Clinic

PUNCTUATION

<div align="center">

THE COLON（ : ）

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A sentence is punctuated with a period, which appears at the end of the sentence.
One may encounter other forms of punctuation within a sentence: commas**,** semi-colons, and **colons**.

- The **colon** shares a key on the computer keyboard with the semi-colon.
- Similar to the semi-colon, the colon links two parts of a sentence.
- Unlike the semi-colon, the colon does <u>not</u> indicate a full stop; rather, the colon signals an immediate and logical link between two parts of a sentence.
- The colon follows an independent clause and introduces a statement or list that clarifies or explains the independent clause.

Use a colon
- to introduce a list, but only if the list is introduced by an independent clause (a clause that can stand on its own).
  e.g., There were four ingredients in the soup: tomatoes, beans, celery, and carrots. < <u>Correct</u>
       The four ingredients in the soup were: tomatoes, beans, celery, and carrots. < <u>Incorrect</u>

- to link two independent clauses when the second clause explains, clarifies, or summarizes the first clause and there is NO coordinating conjunction (and, but, or, nor, yet, so, for) or transitional phrase between the two clauses.
  e.g., The soup is easy to prepare: It requires only four ingredients. < <u>Correct</u>
       The soup is easy to prepare: and it requires only four ingredients. < <u>Incorrect</u>
       The soup is easy to prepare: requiring only four ingredients. < <u>Incorrect</u>

Rules for capitalization following a colon

<u>Do</u> capitalize the first word following the colon when
- the second clause is a formal rule or requires emphasis.
  e.g., We all try to follow the Golden Rule: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

- the second part of the sentence contains an independent clause and the first part of the

sentence serves to introduce the second part.
e.g., Copernicus made a startling discovery: The earth revolves around the sun.

- the material following the colon consists of two sentences or more.
  e.g., There are several advantages to getting a head start on writing a paper: First, you have plenty of time to revise. Second, you have time to work with a coach at the BBCC.

- the colon is used following a short introductory word.
  e.g., Note: All travel expenses will be paid.

Do <u>not</u> capitalize the first word following the colon
- if the second clause illustrates or explains the first clause. (See example above)
- if the material in the second part of the sentence cannot stand alone. (See example above)

Additional uses for the colon

- Use a colon to punctuate the greeting in a business letter.   e.g., Dear Ms. Martin:
- Use a colon to introduce a long quote that is set apart from the text.
- Use a colon following each guide word in a memo heading. e.g., **TO:** Ms. Kim