Colons:
Colons follow independent clauses. Independent clauses are clauses that can stand alone as sentences. They can introduce one of three things: a list, a quote or a defining example.

Colons Introduce a list of Items
- There are three famous Manning quarterbacks: Eli, Archie and Peyton.
- Consultants at the Writing Center do three things: write reflections, work late, and party.

Colons Introduce a Quote
- Before his fight with Lennox Lewis Mike Tyson stated: “I’m coming for you man. My style is impetuous. My defense is impregnable and I’m just vicious. I want your heart.”

Colons introduce a defining example
- The title of their famous song signifies Credence Clearwater Revival’s feelings about the Vietnam War: “Fortunate Son.”

Semicolons:
Semicolons can be used to connect related independent clauses; they can also be used as a substitute for commas in lengthy complex lists.

Semicolons can be used to connect related independent clauses
- I cannot wait to graduate from college; the opportunities for English majors to find high-paying jobs are endless.
- I love watching Dr. Phil; it is well worth the hour of my life I can never get back.

Colons can be used as a substitute for commas
- Writing Center consultants help students in many different areas of writing: they help students with organization, a reasoning activity; they encourage students to seek out grammatical errors in their assignments, which doesn’t have to be as frustrating as it sounds; and they help students learn to become better writers, which makes everyone happy.
Semicolons have two basic functions: They connect two sentences. They act as super-commas.

**CONNECTING TWO SENTENCES:**
A semicolon is a way to join two complete sentences so that your reader sees a relationship between the ideas these sentences convey. The semicolon is most often used for this purpose.

Examples:
Andrew is a good typist; he makes few mistakes.

Mrs. Smith is a successful real estate salesperson; however, she was unable to sell her own house.

Remember you must have a *complete* sentence on *both* sides of the semicolon. Also, of you connect complete sentences with a coordinating conjunction, one of the FANBOYS (For, And, Nor, But, Or, Yet, So) you do *not* need a semicolon; however, you do need a comma.

Example:
Christina Aguilera is an amazing singer, but Britney Spears is tone-deaf!

**USING A SEMICOLON AS A SUPER COMMA:**
Writers normally separate items in a list with commas to let the reader know where one item ends and the next begins, for example:

I am taking History, Math, Spanish, and Psychology this semester.

When such lists are complex, meaning that one (or more) of the items already has a comma, semicolons should replace the commas that would normally separate them in the list and act as a “super comma.”

Examples:
This summer, I am going to visit many cities such as New York, New York; Wilmington, Ohio; Houston, Texas; and San Francisco, California.

Jordan’s mom believes three things: that every situation, no matter how dismal, will be happily resolved; that no one knows more about human nature than she does; and that Jordan, who is forty years old, will never be able to do his own laundry.