

 **Austin Peay**
State University
APSU Writing Center
Colons

Colons

Resource: *The LB Brief Handbook*, 5th ed., pgs. 326-329.

A **colon** calls attention to what follows, introduces, and directs attention to an explanation, a summary, or a quotation.

Basic Rules

- When a colon appears between two independent clauses, it signals that the second clause will explain or expand on the first.
 - **Example:** For I had no brain tumor, no eyestrain, no high blood pressure, nothing wrong with me at all: I simply had migraine headaches.
- A colon is also used after an independent clause to formally introduce a direct quotation.
 - **Example:** Marcel Proust explained the importance of mindfulness in this way: “The true journey of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having fresh eyes.”
- Although an independent clause should always precede the colon, a phrase may sometimes follow it, especially when the clause is acting as an introduction of the phrase.
 - **Example:** I was finally confronted with what I had dreaded for months: the due date for the final balloon payment on my car loan.
- A colon may introduce lists.
 - **Example:** Three students received internships: Asa, Vanna, and Jack.
- Avoid placing a colon between a verb and its complement or after the words “including” and “such as.”
 - **Incorrect Example:** The winners were: Asa, Vanna, and Jack.
 - **Correct Example:** The winners were Asa, Vanna, and Jack.
 - **Incorrect Example:** Many vegetarians do not eat dairy such as: butter and cheese.
 - **Correct Example:** Many vegetarians do not eat dairy such as butter and cheese.