Writing Skills in Action 4: Semicolons and Colons

Writing Skills in Action is designed to put into practice specific writing traits, i.e., grammar, punctuation, usage, introduction, conclusion, etc., to develop your understanding of how to write more effectively.

Prompts may be creative fiction or analytical responses – determine the type of prompt and the audience then write accordingly.

Directions

**Write a half-page response** to the prompt below. While you write your response, include sentences that fit the grammar and punctuation rules below, and any other specific requirements for this task.

You need to identify each rule/requirement by using the “Comment” tool (under the “Review” tab) in Word.

Example: *He said, “Treat her as you would your own daughter.”*

Prompt(s):

1. Children’s stories are often allegorical and presented in a straightforward manner. This week, take your favorite children’s story, fairy tale, or myth and complicate it. Use the original as a jumping-off point to introduce wild elements, unlikely back stories, and off-center characters.
2. The interplanetary travel nonprofit Mars One is holding a competition for those eager to be the first humans to live on Mars. One of the finalists has said, “If I die on Mars, that would be an accomplishment.” Would you ever volunteer for such a mission? Do you have what it takes to survive on a desolate, desert planet? Write about how you’d feel if you got the opportunity to leave Earth. What would you miss, and what would you be glad to leave behind?
3. Watch the Ted talk called “How Schools Kill Creativity” -- <https://www.ted.com/playlists/77/11_must_see_ted_talks> -- then discuss how you would reform the education system.

The rules below are taken directly from the grammar and punctuation skills unit. You must write a sentence for each rule listed below. Each sentence must be grammatically and punctually correct. Label each sentence using the “Comment” feature in Word (click the review tab) to indicate which rule is applied in the sentence.

1. Semicolon Rule 1: Use a semicolon in place of a period to separate two sentences where the conjunction has been left out.
   * *Example:* *Call me tomorrow; I will give you my answer then.*
2. Semicolon Rule 2: It is preferable to use the semicolon before introductory words such as *namely, however, therefore, that is, i.e., for example, e.g.,* or *for instance* when they introduce a complete sentence. It is also preferable to use a comma after the introductory word.
   * Example: *You will want to bring many backpacking items; for example, sleeping bags, pans, and warm clothing will make the trip better.*
3. Colon Rule 1: Use a colon after a complete sentence to introduce a list of items when introductory words such as namely, for example, or that is DO NOT appear.
   * *Example:* *You may be required to bring many items: sleeping bags, pans, and warm clothing.*
4. Do NOT write a single sentence that is a comma splice.
   * A **comma splice (c/s)** is an error caused by joining two strong clauses with only a comma instead separating the clauses with a conjunction, a semicolon, or a period.
5. Do NOT write a single sentence that is a run-on.
   * A **run-on sentence (r/o)** is created by joining two clauses without any punctuation.