

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Colons VS Semicolons

### Definition

**Colons (:) introduce lists, explanations, or elaborations.**

**Semicolons (;) join related independent clauses without a coordinating conjunction or separate items in complex lists containing commas.**

### Example

| Mark            | Example                                                     | Purpose                |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Parentheses ( ) | "The meeting (which lasted two hours) covered many topics." | Additional information |
| Ellipses (...)  | "The poem begins, 'Roses are red...'"                       | Omitted text           |
| Ellipses (...)  | "If only I had..."                                          | Unfinished thought     |

### Part 1: Multiple Choice Questions

**Select the sentence that correctly uses either a colon or semicolon.**

1. a) The Arctic tundra has a distinct characteristic: it lacks trees due to permafrost.
- b) The Arctic tundra has a distinct characteristic; it lacks trees due to permafrost.
- c) The Arctic tundra has a distinct characteristic, it lacks trees due to permafrost.
- d) The Arctic tundra has a distinct characteristic it lacks trees due to permafrost.

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2. a) Three mammal species have adapted to the harsh tundra climate, the Arctic fox, the caribou, and the polar bear.  
b) Three mammal species have adapted to the harsh tundra climate: the Arctic fox, the caribou, and the polar bear.  
c) Three mammal species have adapted to the harsh tundra climate; the Arctic fox, the caribou, and the polar bear.  
d) Three mammal species have adapted to the harsh tundra climate the Arctic fox, the caribou, and the polar bear.
3. a) Researchers collected samples from three tundra locations, Barrow, Alaska; Toolik Lake, Alaska, and Ellesmere Island, Canada.  
b) Researchers collected samples from three tundra locations: Barrow, Alaska, Toolik Lake, Alaska, and Ellesmere Island, Canada.  
c) Researchers collected samples from three tundra locations; Barrow, Alaska, Toolik Lake, Alaska, and Ellesmere Island, Canada.  
d) Researchers collected samples from three tundra locations: Barrow, Alaska; Toolik Lake, Alaska; and Ellesmere Island, Canada.
4. a) The Arctic growing season is extremely short; plants must complete their life cycles within 6-10 weeks.  
b) The Arctic growing season is extremely short: plants must complete their life cycles within 6-10 weeks.  
c) The Arctic growing season is extremely short, plants must complete their life cycles within 6-10 weeks.  
d) The Arctic growing season is extremely short plants must complete their life cycles within 6-10 weeks.

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### Part 2: Fill in the Blank

**Insert either a colon (:) or semicolon (;) where appropriate in each sentence.**

1. The Arctic tundra has an extremely harsh climate \_\_\_\_\_ temperatures can drop below -30°F in winter.

2. Tundra plants have developed several adaptations to survive \_\_\_\_\_ short stature, hairy stems, and ability to photosynthesize in low temperatures.

3. The research team visited three key Arctic regions \_\_\_\_\_ northern Alaska, northern Canada, and Svalbard.

4. The permafrost layer in the tundra is thawing at an alarming rate \_\_\_\_\_ this could release massive amounts of stored carbon into the atmosphere.

5. Scientists identified three categories of tundra plants \_\_\_\_\_ grasses and sedges, mosses and lichens, and small flowering plants.

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## Colons VS Semicolons – Answer Key

### Part 1: Multiple Choice Questions

1. b) 2. b) 3. d) 4. a)

### Part 2: Fill in the Blank

1. ; (semicolon joins two independent clauses)
2. : (colon introduces a list of adaptations)
3. : (colon introduces a list of regions)
4. ; (semicolon joins two related independent clauses)
5. : (colon introduces categories in a list)