

# Grammar: colons

## With the Writing Development Centre

Colons are used to indicate connections between different parts of a sentence. The three uses of colons are: to introduce lists and quotations, and to indicate further detail.

### Using colons to introduce lists

Colons can be used to introduce simple lists, quotations, explanations and examples.

For example:

There are a few significant areas to explore: artistic impression, cultural representation and aesthetic presentation.

### Using colons to introduce quotations

Colons can be used to introduce a quotation that follows on from the main point being made but is grammatically distinct.

For example:

The approach in question has merit within many fields of study: "The main use of qualitative research is to help researchers to grapple with the complexities of social life" (Silverman, 2018, p.45).

### Using colons to indicate further detail

Colons can also be used in titles of academic books, dissertations or theses to indicate further detail.

For example:

Developing students' learning in higher education: A study to investigate practice.

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