Semicolons and Colons

Semicolon

1. Semicolons join independent clauses in compound sentences that do not have coordinating conjunctions (and, or, but, nor, for, so, yet) and commas as connectors (however, moreover, thus, and therefore).
   - Comparisons are often used to emphasize a basic idea; however, they are more often used to explain something complex by showing how something we don’t understand relates to something we do.
   - There was no running or shouting; all the children behaved very well; therefore, they will all get a treat.

2. Semicolons separate long or complicated items in a series which already includes commas.
   - The speakers were Dr. Judith Cornwell, English; Dr. Peter Mortrude, biology; Dr. Shirley Enders, history; and Dr. Charles Viceroy, mathematics.
   - She communicates well with others; completes her assignments; and demonstrates time manageability.

3. Semicolons separate two long or complex independent clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction if confusion would result from using a comma.
   - Ishmael, the narrator in Moby-Dick, says, “whenever it is a damp, drizzly November” in his heart and soul; but Ahab, the captain, goes to sea because he’s obsessed with hunting the whale, Moby Dick.
   - The class teaches the participants how to handle a lot of paperwork, work under pressure, and juggle deadlines; and, if they complete the requirements, they will have a valuable addition to their resumes.

Colon

1. In a sentence, a colon precedes a list.
   - The use of these punctuation marks often confuses students: comma, semicolon, colon, hyphen, and dash.
   - The Stearns County Theatrical Company announces the opening of the following plays: Lear, May 10th; Death of a Salesman, June 15th; and Camelot, August 20th.

2. In a sentence, a colon separates an explanation, rule, or example from a preceding independent clause.
   - After a sleepless night, the senator made her decision: she would not seek re-election.
   - Music is more than a mechanical arrangement of sounds: it is an expression of deep feelings.

3. In a business letter, a colon follows the salutation.
   - Dear Mr. Peterson:

4. In a business memo, a colon follows the heading.
   - TO:

5. In time, a colon separates the hour and the minutes.
   - 5:30 p.m.

6. In literary works, a colon separates the chapter and verse, citations, and the volume and number.
   - Genesis 1:18-20
   - Part 3:121
   - Vol. 2:34

7. In a title, a colon separates the main title from the sub title.

8. In a bibliography, a colon separates the place of publication and the name of the publisher.