

**PATTERN 3:** COMPOUND SENTENCE WITH  
EXPLANATORY STATEMENT  
(clauses separated by a colon)

General statement (idea) : specific statement (example).  
(an independent clause) (an independent clause)

### Explanation

This pattern is exactly like PATTERNS 1 and 2 in structure: Although it is a compound, it is very different in content, as the colon implies. The colon performs a special function: It signals the reader that something important or explanatory will follow (as this very sentence illustrates). In this particular pattern, the colon signals that the second clause will specifically explain or expand some idea expressed only vaguely in the first clause.

The first statement will contain a word or an idea that needs explaining; the second statement will give some specific information or example about that idea.

### WHEN TO USE THIS PATTERN

Use it when you want the second part of a sentence to explain the first part, give an example, or provide an answer to an implied question.

In the following examples, notice that the first independent statement mentions something in a general way: “the bouquet,” “a single horrifying meaning.” Then the independent statement after the colon answers the questions: “What bouquet?” “Which horrifying meaning?” The second clause makes the first one clear.

### Examples

The bouquet was special: It contained the roses she loved best.

The empty coffin in the center of the crypt had a single horrifying meaning: Dracula had left his tomb to stalk the village streets in search of fresh blood.

Remember Yogi Berra’s advice: It ain’t over till it’s over.

NOTE: Some writers capitalize the first word after the colon in this pattern, but this is a matter of personal taste and styling.

### PATTERN 3

A lizard never worries about  
“Weekdays are very similar  
same size, but some  
others.”—Joel Gutierrez  
Hawaii exceeded her expectations  
people kinder.  
The football draft was suddenly  
needed.

### Professional examples

“The murmuring water, the  
lemon sun, the flight of a  
unreal the tableau of the  
Hill, *Ruling Passion*

“To be successful, your paper  
written to enlighten other

“Such disputes are occasional  
knowing you have conversed  
Rosa and Paul Eschholz,

“Old cars and young children  
a responsibility and have  
—Claudia Glenn Downin

NOTE: The sentence above  
clause beginning with  
short that the author  
dinator.

### Checkpoints

✓ Now that you have learned  
notice the differences among  
three different ways to perform  
perform different functions;

PATTERN 1 must make the  
idea, statements you can  
sentences;

PATTERN 2 must have a  
implied but not state  
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A lizard never worries about losing its tail: It can always grow another.  
"Weekdays are very similar to identical suitcases: They are all the  
same size, but some people can pack more into them than  
others."—Joel Gutierrez

Hawaii exceeded her expectations: The breezes were softer and the  
people kinder.

The football draft was successful: The team got the quarterback they  
needed.

## Professional examples

"The murmuring water, the morning fresh garden unheated yet by the  
lemon sun, the flight of a white-browed blackbird: all helped to make  
unreal the tableau of the man kneeling by the sundial."—Reginald  
Hill, *Ruling Passion*

"To be successful, your paper must have a public purpose: it should be  
written to enlighten others beside yourself."—*Perrine's Literature*

"Such disputes are occasionally satisfying: you can take pleasure in  
knowing you have converted someone to your point of view."—Alfred  
Rosa and Paul Eschholz, *Models for Writers*

"Old cars and young children have several things in common: Both are  
a responsibility and have to be fed often or they break down."  
—Claudia Glenn Downing, *Lear's*, November 1992

NOTE: The sentence above has a capital letter after the colon and a final  
clause beginning with the coordinator *or*. The final clause is so  
short that the author chose to omit the comma before the coor-  
dinator.

## Checkpoints

✓ Now that you have learned these three compound constructions,  
notice the differences among them. PATTERNS 1, 2, and 3 are *not* simply  
three different ways to punctuate the same sentence. The words must  
perform different functions; the sentences must do different things:

PATTERN 1 must make two closely related statements about the same  
idea, statements you do not want to punctuate as two separate  
sentences;

PATTERN 2 must have a specific word or words from the first clause  
implied but not stated in the second—otherwise no ellipsis is  
possible;

PATTERN 3 must have a second independent clause that in some way amplifies or explains the idea stated in the first independent clause. Do not use this pattern with a colon unless the second statement is related to the first.

✓ Remember the test for every compound sentence: both clauses must be full statements and capable of standing alone as sentences.

### Exercises

Complete each of the following sentences with an independent clause. (1) If the first clause is missing, provide a general statement. (2) If the second clause is missing, add an explanation.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ :  
the students all got A's on their papers.
2. The dot-com companies have changed the work week: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ .
3. I finally developed my own Web page: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ .
4. The firefighter took a terrible risk: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ .
5. \_\_\_\_\_ :  
we got to experience Times Square, see a Broadway show, and go to the top of the Empire State Building.

As you read, watch for sentences that follow this pattern and add them below.

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### SENTENCES WITH SERIES

PATTERNS 4–8, which follow, :

#### WHAT IS A SERIES?

When you see or hear the words "The World Series," you think of baseball, but let's think about the structure.

A series is a group of three or more items in the same slot of the sentence. A series can be a list (for example, all nouns or all verbs) or a series of items with the same grammatical function. You may have three or four verbs for the same preposition; three or four nouns for the same slot. You may have a series of words but also with phrases or clauses. The items in different patterns.

A, B, C      A

or with paired items:

A and B      ,      C

#### WHEN IS A SERIES HELPFUL?

A series can help eliminate long sentences. If you want to list or give several details, you can use a series to give a different kind of emphasis. You do not single out the last item; that all the items are equal.