

Dashes, Semicolons and Colons

In Year 6, we use these three punctuations to join two, closely-related main clauses. Remember, a main clause needs to have a subject and a verb PLUS it needs to make sense on its own.

Example: **subject** **verb**

✓ Rabbits eat hay.

✗ Since rabbits eat hay. (although it has a **subject** and a **verb**, the subordinating conjunctions 'since' makes the reader think, 'what happens SINCE the rabbits eat hay?' so it isn't a main clause now, but subordinate.

Let's try! Match the first sentence to a closely-related second sentence.

The main part of a rabbit's diet is hay;

we call these bunnies Lion-Headed as they look like their feline cousins.

These quadrupeds enjoy hopping and binking -

it is a great source of fibre and nutrients for them.

Some rabbits have large fluffy manes;

this means that they must have a constant supply of toys to grind their teeth down.

Amazingly, rabbits teeth continue growing their whole lives

this happens when they are very excited or happy.


Notice, after the — or ; there is NO capital letter.

Colons

In Year 6, we use a **colon** the same way as a dash or semicolon, however, we try to reserve them for definitions. *Look* where the defined word comes in the first sentence.

Some rabbits, when they are very excited, enjoy **binking**: this is when rabbits jump around in a circle, kicking their legs out like a bucking bull.

This does not work:



Some rabbits like **binking** when they are excited: this is when rabbits jump around in a circle.

This is because the word being defined isn't at the end of the first sentence so the reader thinks I'm defining the word *excited*.

Choose three words from your definitions yesterday and put them into colon-definition sentences below.

1) _____ : _____.

2) _____ : _____.

3) _____ : _____.