ANSWER KEY WITH EXPLANATIONS

Punctuation and Meaning Quiz: Commas, Semicolons, Colons

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https://englishtestsonline.com/punctuation-and-meaning-quiz-commas-semicolons-colons/

1	**D**	2	**A**	3	**D**	4	**B**	5	**C**	6	**C**	7	**A**	8	**D**	9	**D**	10	**C**
11	**C**	12	**A**	13	**A**	14	**B**	15	**B**										

Explanations

1. "My uncle, who works in Bristol, is a pilot." What do the commas tell us?
✔ **D) I have one uncle, and the clause is extra information.**
Commas make the relative clause non-defining: it adds extra information about the only uncle we mean.

2. "The passengers who had tickets got on the train." What does this mean?
✔ **A) Only the passengers with tickets got on.**
Without commas the clause is defining: it tells us which passengers got on.

3. Choose the correctly punctuated sentence.
✔ **D) It was raining; we stayed indoors.**
A comma alone cannot join two sentences (a comma splice). A semicolon can.

4. Which sentence asks Grandad to come and eat?
✔ **B) Let's eat, Grandad!**
A comma separates the name of the person we speak to from the rest of the sentence.

5. Add one comma to make it clear: "While the children were washing the dog ran into the garden."
✔ **C) While the children were washing, the dog ran into the garden.**
A comma after the introductory clause stops the reader from first reading washing the dog.

6. "However she explained the rules, the players were confused." What does this mean?
✔ **C) In whatever way she explained the rules, the players were confused.**
Without a comma, however means in whatever way.

7. Which punctuation mark is best? "You only need one thing ___ patience."
✔ **A) a colon**
A colon introduces an explanation or what comes next.

8. Choose the correctly punctuated sentence.
✔ **D) Sales fell; however, profits stayed high.**
Before a linking adverb that starts a new sentence, use a semicolon: Sales fell; however, profits stayed high.

9. "There were twenty-odd people at the meeting." What does this mean?
✔ **D) There were about twenty people.**
With a hyphen, -odd means approximately. Without it (twenty odd people) it would mean strange people.

10. Which sentence is correctly punctuated in British English?
✔ **C) She is a well-known author.**
A compound adjective has a hyphen before a noun: a well-known author.

11. "They sold me a little used car." What does this mean?
✔ **C) a small second-hand car**
Without a hyphen, little describes the car: a small used car. A little-used car would be one that is rarely used.

12. "I didn't go to the party, because Sam was there." What does this mean?
✔ **A) I stayed at home, and Sam was the reason.**
The comma before because shows that I didn't go, and Sam being there was the reason.

13. We need to ___ the old armchair with new fabric.
✔ **A) re-cover**
The hyphen changes the meaning: re-cover means put a new cover on; recover means get better.

14. We visited Leeds, England ___ Cardiff, Wales ___ and Glasgow, Scotland.
✔ **B) ; … ;**
When the items in a list contain commas, semicolons separate them clearly.

15. In British English, which is the usual style after a colon?
✔ **B) There was one problem: nobody had a key.**
In British English we normally continue in lower case after a colon, unless a proper noun or quotation follows.