# Lesson 18  Colons between clauses

**Focus**  using a colon to separate main clauses

**Key terms**  main clause, colon, semicolon, punctuation

**Focus text**  The mill workers' demands were clear: they wanted better working conditions.
Current working conditions were inhumane: some workers were dying.

### TEACH

Show the focus text. Explain that it is about a historical dispute between mill workers and mill owners. Read it aloud. Discuss the meaning of 'inhumane' and what it tells us about the dispute.

Discuss the first sentence. Explain that it is made up of two main clauses – both parts of the sentence make sense independently. Ask the pupils to name the punctuation mark used between the two clauses [colon]. The pupils should be familiar with using a colon to introduce a list. Explain that a colon can also be used to separate two main clauses in a sentence – as can a semicolon, but with an important difference.

Explain that in this sentence the colon is used to introduce another clause that expands on something already mentioned in the first clause. The first clause introduces the idea of the workers' demands and the second clause tells us what the demands are.

Invite the pupils to orally compose other sentences on the same theme, following the same model [e.g. The decision was made: there would be a strike.].

Discuss the second sentence. Again, a colon is used to separate two main clauses within a single sentence. Explain that a colon is used rather than a semicolon when the second clause explains, illustrates or gives a reason for the first [e.g. here the second clause explains or illustrates *why* working conditions were inhumane]. If we wanted to use a conjunction to join these two clauses, we could use 'because', but the colon makes the sentence more powerful.

Invite the pupils to orally compose alternative endings for the sentence [e.g. … every day there were terrible accidents.].

**EXTEND**  Discuss other uses of a colon [e.g. to introduce a quotation or example].

### PRACTISE

Pupil book page 25

### APPLY

- Invite the pupils to look for different uses of colons in different types of texts [e.g. introducing quotations in an autobiography; giving examples in a text book; separating main clauses in a report].
- Encourage the pupils to use these examples as models to help them use colons in their own writing.
- When writing discussion texts, the pupils construct sentences using colons. They use the first clause to introduce an idea and the second to expand or explain it [e.g. There is one very important problem: …].

### ASSESS

**Dictation:** Andrew had concerns before they set off: the weather seemed to be closing in. However, the group were determined to reach the summit. Andrew insisted on one rule: they must stay in radio contact at all times.

**Say:** Use a colon between main clauses twice when punctuating this text.