

Section A: Mixed Punctuation Practice

1. (semicolon)

☒ The eagle circled overhead; it was searching for prey.

Why: A semicolon joins two independent clauses that are closely related; each side must be able to stand alone as a full sentence, and no capital letter is needed after it.

2. (colon: clause boundary)

☒ The eagle's talons are deadly: they can crush bone.

Why: A colon can join two independent clauses when the second explains the first; no capital letter is needed straight after the colon.

3. (dash: clause boundary)

☒ The nest was empty – the eaglets had already fledged.

Why: A single dash can mark the boundary between two independent clauses; it sits between the two complete ideas, not partway through one.

4. (colon: introducing a list)

☒ Eagles hunt several types of prey: fish, rabbits and small birds.

Why: A colon introduces the list, which follows straight after it; list items don't need capital letters unless they are proper nouns.

5. (hyphen)

☒ The photographer captured a fish-eating eagle on camera.

Why: The hyphen joins fish and eating to make clear the eagle eats fish, avoiding the ambiguous unhyphenated version.

Section B: Inserting the Missing Punctuation

1. The falcon dived towards its prey; the rabbit had no chance to escape.

Why: Two closely related independent clauses can be joined with a semicolon instead of a full stop.

2. The golden eagle is a formidable hunter: it can lift prey twice its own weight.

Why: The second clause explains the first, so a colon can join them.

3. The chick refused to eat – it had not yet learned to hunt.

Why: A dash can mark the boundary between two independent clauses.

4. Bald eagles build their nests from several materials: sticks, moss and grass.

Why: A colon introduces the list of materials, with commas separating the items.

5. The bird watchers followed a well-known eagle across the valley.

Why: well-known needs a hyphen to show the two words work together as a single describing word.

Section C: Punctuate the List

A golden eagle's diet includes the following prey:

- rabbits and hares
- grouse and other game birds
- foxes, caught occasionally
- carrion, when food is scarce.

Why: A colon introduces the list. Every bullet point is punctuated the same way — lower case, with a full stop only on the final item since together they complete the introductory sentence.

Section D: Punctuate the Passage

Eagles are among the most powerful birds of prey: their eyesight is roughly four times sharper than a human's. A golden eagle's wingspan can reach over two metres; some are even larger. When hunting, an eagle relies on several senses: sight, hearing and an acute awareness of movement. Sea eagles prefer fish, rabbits and waterfowl – bald eagles share a similar diet. Ornithologists have long studied these fast-flying hunters, tracking their migration across continents. A well-timed dive can reach speeds of over one hundred and fifty miles per hour: few creatures can escape once spotted.

Why: The passage includes: a colon marking the boundary between independent clauses (birds of prey: their eyesight...), a semicolon joining two independent clauses (over two metres; some are even larger), a colon introducing a list (several senses: sight, hearing...), a dash marking the boundary between independent clauses (waterfowl – bald eagles...), hyphens avoiding ambiguity (fast-flying / well-timed), and a final colon marking a clause boundary (per hour: few creatures...).

Section E: Find and Correct

1. The eagle landed on the cliff; the wind was strong.

Why: Two closely related independent clauses can be joined with a semicolon.

2. The eyrie was carefully built: it had to withstand strong winds.

Why: A colon, not a comma, is needed since the second clause explains the first.

3. The eaglet took its first flight – it was a nervous moment for everyone watching.

Why: A dash is needed to mark the boundary between the two independent clauses.

4. Sea eagles eat: fish, crabs and small mammals.

Why: A colon is needed to introduce the list, along with commas separating the items.

5. The well-known bird reserve protects several eagle nests.

Why: well-known needs a hyphen to join the words into a single describing word.

6. Eagles have three key features:

- sharp talons
- keen eyesight
- powerful wings

Why: The list needs a colon to introduce it, and every bullet point should be punctuated the same way — here, each one starts with a lower-case letter and has no full stop.