Keep Time Steady

Sort sentences by their verb tenses.

5.LF.39.f "Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verb tense, including subject-verb agreement."

NAME _____ DATE _____

STEADY TENSE

When two actions happened in the past, both verbs should use past tense.

Last winter, a seal balanced a ball and caught a fish.

TENSE SHIFT

One verb changes to present tense even though both actions happened in the past.

Last winter, a seal balanced a ball and catches a fish.

1 SORT

8 items

Circle STEADY or SHIFT for each sentence, then choose two items and explain how you knew.

1. Last Tuesday, Nora painted a bench and cleans her brush. STEADY SHIFT
2. Two days ago, Kai watered the plants and fills the birdbath. STEADY SHIFT
3. Last month, Ben counted the coins and sorted them. STEADY SHIFT
4. Yesterday afternoon, Ruby tossed the rope and caught it. STEADY SHIFT
5. Last spring, Tessa baked muffins and shares them. STEADY SHIFT
6. Three weeks ago, Leo carried a box and set it down. STEADY SHIFT
7. Last Friday, Maya climbed the hill and rested at the top. STEADY SHIFT
8. Last Sunday, Eli opened a letter and mailed a reply. STEADY SHIFT

2 PROVE IT

Explain your thinking

Pick two items from Part 1. For each one, tell how you knew where it belonged.

ITEM # _____ **HOW I KNEW** _____

ITEM # _____ **HOW I KNEW** _____

3 MAKE YOUR OWN

One of each

Write one new STEADY sentence and one new SHIFT sentence about two actions that happened in the past.

STEADY _____

SHIFT _____

CHALLENGE

Choose one SHIFT sentence from Part 1 and rewrite it so both verbs show past tense.

ANSWER KEY

Keep Time Steady

GRADE 5 · 5.LF.39.f

PART 1 · SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	Last Tuesday, Nora painted a bench and cleans her brush.	**SHIFT**	Painted is past tense, but cleans is present tense.
2	Two days ago, Kai watered the plants and fills the birdbath.	**SHIFT**	Watered is past tense, but fills is present tense.
3	Last month, Ben counted the coins and sorted them.	**STEADY**	Counted and sorted are both past tense.
4	Yesterday afternoon, Ruby tossed the rope and caught it.	**STEADY**	Tossed and caught are both past tense.
5	Last spring, Tessa baked muffins and shares them.	**SHIFT**	Baked is past tense, but shares is present tense.
6	Three weeks ago, Leo carried a box and set it down.	**STEADY**	Carried and set are both past tense.
7	Last Friday, Maya climbed the hill and rested at the top.	**STEADY**	Climbed and rested are both past tense.
8	Last Sunday, Eli opened a letter and mailed a reply.	**STEADY**	Opened and mailed are both past tense.

PART 2 · PROVE IT

Accept any explanation that names the deciding feature from the rule box for the chosen item.

PART 3 · MAKE YOUR OWN (SAMPLE ANSWERS)

- **STEADY**: Last weekend, Iris built a kite and flew it.
- **SHIFT**: Yesterday, Felix fixed a bike and rides it.

Challenge: Last Tuesday, Nora painted a bench and cleaned her brush.

For Part 2, look for explanations that use the past-time phrase and identify whether both verbs are past tense. In a SHIFT sentence, students should identify the present-tense verb.