Speech Mark Detectives

Sort sentences by their direct-speech punctuation.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.4.2b "Use commas and quotation marks to mark direct speech and quotations from a text."

NAME _____ DATE _____

CORRECTLY MARKED

The spoken words are inside quotation marks. A comma separates the spoken words from the speaker's tag when needed.

"Put your helmets on," urged Ms. Chen.

NEEDS FIXING

A comma or quotation mark is missing or in the wrong place.

The gardener replied "Water the seeds."

1 SORT

8 items

Read each sentence, then circle CORRECT or FIX IT.

1. The guide said, "Stay with the group." CORRECT FIX IT

2. "I packed my lunch", Eli explained. CORRECT FIX IT

3. Mom asked, "Did you feed the fish?" CORRECT FIX IT

4. "This puzzle is tricky" said Owen. CORRECT FIX IT

5. Coach shouted, "Run to the fence". CORRECT FIX IT

6. "Watch the paint dry," whispered Lila. CORRECT FIX IT

7. The librarian said "Choose one book." CORRECT FIX IT

8. "My kite is blue," Harper said. CORRECT FIX IT

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 CORRECT sentence with direct speech. Then write one new FIX IT sentence that has a comma or quotation-mark mistake.

CORRECT _____

FIX IT _____

CHALLENGE

Fix this sentence by adding the missing comma and quotation marks: Our guide announced The cave is closed.

ANSWER KEY # Speech Mark Detectives

GRADE 4 · L.4.2b

PART 1 · SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	The guide said, "Stay with the group."	**CORRECT**	The comma comes before the opening quotation mark, and the spoken words are in quotation marks.
2	"I packed my lunch", Eli explained.	**FIX IT**	The comma should be inside the closing quotation mark.
3	Mom asked, "Did you feed the fish?"	**CORRECT**	The comma and quotation marks correctly mark the direct speech.
4	"This puzzle is tricky" said Owen.	**FIX IT**	A comma is needed after tricky, inside the closing quotation mark.
5	Coach shouted, "Run to the fence".	**FIX IT**	The period should be inside the closing quotation mark.
6	"Watch the paint dry," whispered Lila.	**CORRECT**	The comma is inside the quotation marks before the speaker's tag.
7	The librarian said "Choose one book."	**FIX IT**	A comma is needed before the opening quotation mark.
8	"My kite is blue," Harper said.	**CORRECT**	The spoken words are in quotation marks, and the comma is correctly placed.

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)

- **CORRECT**: "The parade starts soon," reported Kai.
- **FIX IT**: The baker called "The bread is warm."

Challenge: Our guide announced, "The cave is closed."

Accept different student-created sentences if each matches its chosen category. For the challenge, students must add a comma before the opening quotation mark and place the spoken words inside quotation marks.