Comma Detectives

Find compound sentences that need a comma.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.4.2c "Use a comma before a coordinating conjunction in a compound sentence."

NAME _____ DATE _____

COMMA USED

Two complete thoughts are joined by a coordinating conjunction. A comma comes right before the conjunction.

The wind picked up, and the kites soared higher.

NEEDS A COMMA

Two complete thoughts are joined by a coordinating conjunction, but the comma is missing. Add a comma right before the conjunction.

The wind picked up and the kites soared higher.

1 SORT

8 items

Read each sentence and circle the category that matches it.

1.	We packed our lunches, and we walked to the park.	COMMA USED	ADD COMMA
2.	Mia wanted to skate but the rink was closed.	COMMA USED	ADD COMMA
3.	The bell rang, so our class lined up.	COMMA USED	ADD COMMA
4.	I can read the map or you can ask for directions.	COMMA USED	ADD COMMA
5.	The rabbit hid under the porch, yet the dog kept looking.	COMMA USED	ADD COMMA
6.	We could make pancakes, or we could cook eggs.	COMMA USED	ADD COMMA
7.	Luis finished his model but his sister still needed glue.	COMMA USED	ADD COMMA
8.	The trail was muddy, so Dad wore boots.	COMMA USED	ADD COMMA

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 sentence for each category: one with a comma used correctly and one that needs a comma.

COMMA USED _____

ADD COMMA _____

CHALLENGE

Write a compound sentence with two complete thoughts, a comma, and either so, yet, or for.

ANSWER KEY

Comma Detectives

PART 1 · SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	We packed our lunches, and we walked to the park.	**COMMA USED**	A comma comes before and, which joins two complete thoughts.
2	Mia wanted to skate but the rink was closed.	**ADD COMMA**	But joins two complete thoughts, so a comma is needed before but.
3	The bell rang, so our class lined up.	**COMMA USED**	A comma comes before so, which joins two complete thoughts.
4	I can read the map or you can ask for directions.	**ADD COMMA**	Or joins two complete thoughts, so a comma is needed before or.
5	The rabbit hid under the porch, yet the dog kept looking.	**COMMA USED**	A comma comes before yet, which joins two complete thoughts.
6	We could make pancakes, or we could cook eggs.	**COMMA USED**	A comma comes before or, which joins two complete thoughts.
7	Luis finished his model but his sister still needed glue.	**ADD COMMA**	But joins two complete thoughts, so a comma is needed before but.
8	The trail was muddy, so Dad wore boots.	**COMMA USED**	A comma comes before so, which joins two complete thoughts.

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)

- **COMMA USED**: Nora drew the poster, and Eli wrote the title.
- **ADD COMMA**: Nora drew the poster and Eli wrote the title.

Challenge: The bus was late, so we waited under the shelter.

Accept any explanation that names the deciding feature from the rule box for the chosen item. All eight sentences have two complete thoughts joined by a coordinating conjunction. Check that students place the comma immediately before the conjunction.