Pause Signal Sort

Choose the punctuation that matches the kind of pause.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.2a "Use punctuation (comma, ellipsis, dash) to indicate a pause or break."

NAME _____ DATE _____

BRIEF PAUSE

Use a comma after an introductory word or phrase to mark a short pause before the main idea.

At dawn, Keisha watered the basil.

TRAILING THOUGHT

Use an ellipsis when a speaker's or writer's thought trails off without finishing.

The next clue is hidden…

1 SORT

8 items

Circle BRIEF or TRAILING for each item, then choose two items and explain how the punctuation shows the kind of pause.

1. After the concert, Luis folded his program. BRIEF TRAILING
2. In the basement, the old pipes rattled. BRIEF TRAILING
3. I meant to bring the… BRIEF TRAILING
4. Before dinner, Sora finished her sketch. BRIEF TRAILING
5. The recipe says to stir… BRIEF TRAILING
6. Our class might visit… BRIEF TRAILING
7. Across the field, a hawk circled slowly. BRIEF TRAILING
8. During rehearsal, Priya checked the microphone. BRIEF TRAILING

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 with a comma for a BRIEF pause and one new sentence with an ellipsis for a TRAILING thought.

BRIEF

TRAILING

CHALLENGE

Write one sentence that uses both a comma for a BRIEF pause and an ellipsis for a TRAILING thought.

ANSWER KEY

Pause Signal Sort

GRADE 8 · L.8.2a

PART 1 · SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	After the concert, Luis folded his program.	**BRIEF**	The comma follows an introductory phrase and marks a short pause.
2	In the basement, the old pipes rattled.	**BRIEF**	The comma follows an introductory phrase and marks a short pause.
3	I meant to bring the...	**TRAILING**	The ellipsis shows that the thought is left unfinished.
4	Before dinner, Sora finished her sketch.	**BRIEF**	The comma follows an introductory phrase and marks a short pause.
5	The recipe says to stir...	**TRAILING**	The ellipsis shows that the thought trails off before the instruction is complete.
6	Our class might visit...	**TRAILING**	The ellipsis shows an unfinished thought.
7	Across the field, a hawk circled slowly.	**BRIEF**	The comma follows an introductory phrase and marks a short pause.
8	During rehearsal, Priya checked the microphone.	**BRIEF**	The comma follows an introductory phrase and marks a short pause.

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)

- **BRIEF**: Without warning, the puppy chased a leaf.
- **TRAILING**: I cannot remember where...

Challenge: Before sunset, Omar said, "I may be late..."

Accept any explanation that names the deciding feature from the rule box for the chosen item. Accept student examples that correctly use a comma after an introductory element and an ellipsis for an unfinished thought.