

Clause Clues

Decide whether a detail is essential or extra.

ELA.10.C.3.1 “Follow the rules of standard English grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling appropriate to grade level.”

NAME _____

DATE _____

ESSENTIAL DETAIL

An essential clause tells which person, place, or thing you mean. Do not set an essential clause off with commas.

The astronaut who repaired the satellite returned safely.

EXTRA DETAIL

An extra clause adds information about a noun that is already clear. Set an extra clause off with commas.

Dr. Bell, whose research changed medicine, received the medal.

1 SORT

8 items

Circle the category for each sentence, then choose two sentences and explain how their punctuation shows whether the clause is essential or extra.

1. The hikers who carried maps led the group.

ESSENTIAL

EXTRA

2. Books that explain the topic are on reserve.

ESSENTIAL

EXTRA

3. Lake Erie, which borders Ohio, freezes in some winters.

ESSENTIAL

EXTRA

4. Any applicant who submits a portfolio will receive feedback.

ESSENTIAL

EXTRA

5. My cousin, who lives in Phoenix, repairs bicycles.

ESSENTIAL

EXTRA

6. Our microscope, which was donated last spring, needs a new lens.

ESSENTIAL

EXTRA

7. The bicycle that has a flat tire is in the garage.

ESSENTIAL

EXTRA

8. The debate team, which won regionals, will travel Friday.

ESSENTIAL

EXTRA

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 sentence with an essential clause and one sentence with an extra clause.

ESSENTIAL _____

EXTRA _____

CHALLENGE

Write two connected sentences about one place, using an essential clause in one sentence and an extra clause in the other.

PART 1 • SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	The hikers who carried maps led the group.	ESSENTIAL	The clause identifies which hikers led the group, so it needs no commas.
2	Books that explain the topic are on reserve.	ESSENTIAL	The clause identifies which books are on reserve, so it needs no commas.
3	Lake Erie, which borders Ohio, freezes in some winters.	EXTRA	Lake Erie is already identified, so the added fact is set off by commas.
4	Any applicant who submits a portfolio will receive feedback.	ESSENTIAL	The clause identifies which applicants will receive feedback, so it needs no commas.
5	My cousin, who lives in Phoenix, repairs bicycles.	EXTRA	My cousin is already identified, so the added fact is set off by commas.
6	Our microscope, which was donated last spring, needs a new lens.	EXTRA	Our microscope is already identified, so the added fact is set off by commas.
7	The bicycle that has a flat tire is in the garage.	ESSENTIAL	The clause identifies which bicycle is in the garage, so it needs no commas.
8	The debate team, which won regionals, will travel Friday.	EXTRA	The debate team is already identified, so the added fact is set off by commas.

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)

- **ESSENTIAL:** The recipe that uses cardamom is on the counter.
- **EXTRA:** Our librarian, who collects old postcards, recommended the novel.

Challenge: Visitors who arrive before noon can join the museum tour. The museum, which reopened in June, displays a new fossil.

Accept equivalent student explanations that identify whether the clause is needed to identify the noun. Check that students use no commas for essential clauses and commas before and after extra clauses.