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.

ANSWER KEY

Clause Clues

GRADE 10 · ELA.10.C.3.1

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.