Sentence Detectives

Sort complete thoughts from incomplete ones.

ELA.5.C.3.1 "Follow the rules of standard English grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling appropriate to grade level."

NAME _____ DATE _____

COMPLETE SENTENCE

A complete sentence has a subject and a predicate. It expresses a complete thought.

A curious otter splashed beside the reeds.

FRAGMENT

A fragment is a group of words that does not express a complete thought. It may be missing a subject, a predicate, or both.

Under the dusty porch.

1 SORT

8 items

Read each group of words, then circle SENTENCE or FRAGMENT for each one.

1. The musicians practiced after school. SENTENCE FRAGMENT

2. My cousin packed three sandwiches. SENTENCE FRAGMENT

3. Beneath the tall bridge. SENTENCE FRAGMENT

4. The tiny robot rolled across the floor. SENTENCE FRAGMENT

5. Because the bus arrived late. SENTENCE FRAGMENT

6. During our science experiment. SENTENCE FRAGMENT

7. We planted seeds in the garden. SENTENCE FRAGMENT

8. With a map and a flashlight. SENTENCE FRAGMENT

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 complete sentence and one new fragment.

SENTENCE _____

FRAGMENT _____

CHALLENGE

Choose the fragment you wrote. Add words to turn it into a complete sentence.

ANSWER KEY

Sentence Detectives

GRADE 5 · ELA.5.C.3.1

PART 1 · SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	The musicians practiced after school.	**SENTENCE**	It has a subject and predicate and expresses a complete thought.
2	My cousin packed three sandwiches.	**SENTENCE**	It has a subject and predicate and expresses a complete thought.
3	Beneath the tall bridge.	**FRAGMENT**	It does not have a subject and predicate or express a complete thought.
4	The tiny robot rolled across the floor.	**SENTENCE**	It has a subject and predicate and expresses a complete thought.
5	Because the bus arrived late.	**FRAGMENT**	It begins with because and leaves the reader waiting for the rest of the thought.
6	During our science experiment.	**FRAGMENT**	It does not express a complete thought.
7	We planted seeds in the garden.	**SENTENCE**	It has a subject and predicate and expresses a complete thought.
8	With a map and a flashlight.	**FRAGMENT**	It does not express a complete thought.

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)

- **SENTENCE**: The painter cleaned her brushes.
- **FRAGMENT**: Before the noisy parade.

Challenge: Before the noisy parade, the painter cleaned her brushes.

Accept any explanation that names the deciding feature from the rule box for the chosen item. Accept original responses if the complete sentence expresses a complete thought and the fragment does not. For the challenge, check that the revised sentence has a subject, a predicate, and a complete thought.