Semicolon Signal Check

Spot the semicolons that follow the rules.

ELA.9.C.3.1 "Follow the rules of standard English grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling appropriate to grade level."

NAME _____ DATE _____

CORRECT

A semicolon can join two closely related complete sentences. Each side must be able to stand alone.

Cliffs rose sharply; hikers reached camp at dusk.

INCORRECT

A semicolon is incorrect when one side is not a complete sentence or when it splits parts that belong together.

During festivals; musicians performed downtown.

1 SORT

8 items

For Part 1, circle CORRECT or INCORRECT for each sentence.

1. The robotics team tested the sensor; the device still failed. CORRECT INCORRECT

2. Maya packed her sketchbook; her brother carried the paint. CORRECT INCORRECT

3. The storm ended; a rainbow appeared above the stadium. CORRECT INCORRECT

4. After rehearsal; the actors returned their costumes. CORRECT INCORRECT

5. Our class planted tulips; the courtyard will bloom in spring. CORRECT INCORRECT

6. The cafeteria served soup; and sandwiches today. CORRECT INCORRECT

7. Because the buses were late; practice began after sunset. CORRECT INCORRECT

8. The librarian shelved the atlas; a student borrowed a novel. CORRECT INCORRECT

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 correctly used semicolon and one sentence with an incorrectly used semicolon.

CORRECT _____

INCORRECT _____

CHALLENGE

Write a sentence with an introductory phrase and two complete clauses, using a comma after the introductory phrase and a semicolon between the clauses.

ANSWER KEY

Semicolon Signal Check

GRADE 9 · ELA.9.C.3.1

PART 1 · SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	The robotics team tested the sensor; the device still failed.	**CORRECT**	Both sides are complete sentences.
2	Maya packed her sketchbook; her brother carried the paint.	**CORRECT**	Both sides are complete sentences.
3	The storm ended; a rainbow appeared above the stadium.	**CORRECT**	Both sides are complete sentences.
4	After rehearsal; the actors returned their costumes.	**INCORRECT**	The semicolon incorrectly follows an introductory phrase.
5	Our class planted tulips; the courtyard will bloom in spring.	**CORRECT**	Both sides are complete sentences.
6	The cafeteria served soup; and sandwiches today.	**INCORRECT**	The words after the semicolon are not a complete sentence.
7	Because the buses were late; practice began after sunset.	**INCORRECT**	The semicolon incorrectly follows an introductory dependent clause.
8	The librarian shelved the atlas; a student borrowed a novel.	**CORRECT**	Both sides are complete sentences.

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)

- **CORRECT**: The exhibit opened early; visitors filled the gallery.
- **INCORRECT**: My cousin; plays the cello.

Challenge: At the final bell, the hallway grew quiet; students waited near the exits.

Accept any explanation that names the deciding feature from the rule box for the chosen item. Items 1, 2, 3, 5, and 8 correctly join two independent clauses. In items 4 and 7, the semicolon follows an introductory element, and item 6 places one before a nonclause.