

Dash Detectives

Sort sentences by whether each dash is used correctly.

10.L.GC.1.60 "Mechanics: Use dashes appropriately. (Master)"

NAME _____

DATE _____

DASH WORKS

A dash can introduce an emphatic ending or surround an extra detail in the middle of a sentence. Use two dashes when the extra detail appears in the middle.

The council reached a decision – postpone the festival.

DASH NEEDS FIXING

A dash is misplaced when it separates a subject from its verb or leaves an inserted detail open on one side. Revise the punctuation so the sentence reads smoothly.

The pilot – checked the controls before takeoff.

1 SORT

8 items

Part 1: Circle the category for each sentence; Part 2: Choose two items, write each item number, and explain why each belongs in its category.

1. Lena had one goal – victory.

CORRECT

REVISE

2. The chemistry lab – has new safety goggles.

CORRECT

REVISE

3. My aunt – who lives in Denver visits each summer.

CORRECT

REVISE

4. The auditorium – packed before noon – grew quiet.

CORRECT

REVISE

5. We found the missing document – at last.

CORRECT

REVISE

6. The chess club – meeting after school – welcomed beginners.

CORRECT

REVISE

7. The captain – announced the practice time.

CORRECT

REVISE

8. We finally saw the prize – a restored telescope.

CORRECT

REVISE

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 for CORRECT and one new sentence for REVISE.

CORRECT _____

REVISE _____

CHALLENGE

Revise one REVISE sentence from Part 1 so its dash use is correct, then name the rule you used.

PART 1 • SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	Lena had one goal – victory.	CORRECT	The dash introduces an emphatic final word after a complete thought.
2	The chemistry lab – has new safety goggles.	REVISE	The dash incorrectly separates the subject, "The chemistry lab," from the verb, "has."
3	My aunt – who lives in Denver visits each summer.	REVISE	The inserted detail begins with a dash but needs a second dash after "Denver."
4	The auditorium – packed before noon – grew quiet.	CORRECT	Two dashes correctly surround extra information in the middle of the sentence.
5	We found the missing document – at last.	CORRECT	The dash adds emphasis to the ending phrase.
6	The chess club – meeting after school – welcomed beginners.	CORRECT	Two dashes correctly set off the extra detail, "meeting after school."
7	The captain – announced the practice time.	REVISE	The dash incorrectly separates the subject, "The captain," from the verb, "announced."
8	We finally saw the prize – a restored telescope.	CORRECT	The dash introduces an emphatic phrase that identifies the prize.

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 signal meant one thing – safety.
- **REVISE:** The violinist – performed the solo.

Challenge: My aunt – who lives in Denver – visits each summer. I added a second dash to close the inserted detail.

Accept equivalent explanations that identify emphasis, inserted details, a missing closing dash, or an incorrect split between a subject and verb. For Part 3, the REVISE sentence should contain a clear dash error.