Time Shift Detectives

Track verb time to spot clear and unclear sentences.

10.L.GC.2.b "Compose texts with varied syntax, reshaping sentences for effect while maintaining consistency of verb tenses, aspects, and moods. (C)"

NAME _____ DATE _____

CONSISTENT VERB TIME

The verbs clearly match the same time frame. A change in verb time is only used when the sentence gives a reason for it.

The sparrows circled above the field and disappeared behind the barn.

UNNEEDED VERB-TIME SHIFT

A verb changes time without a reason. This can make the action sequence confusing.

The sculptor shaped the clay and displays the statue.

1 SORT

8 items

For Part 1, circle the category for each sentence, then for Part 2, choose two items and explain which verbs helped you decide.

1.	The bell rang, and students gathered their materials.	CONSISTENT SHIFTED
2.	Each spring, the creek floods and covers the path.	CONSISTENT SHIFTED
3.	Yesterday, the robot rolled forward and stops at the wall.	CONSISTENT SHIFTED
4.	On Saturday, I painted the fence and cleaned the garage.	CONSISTENT SHIFTED
5.	Last night, we debated the plan and choose a leader.	CONSISTENT SHIFTED
6.	During rehearsal, the actors memorized lines and practice entrances.	CONSISTENT SHIFTED
7.	At noon, the whistle blew, and the runners sprinted toward the gate.	CONSISTENT SHIFTED
8.	The conductor raised her baton, and the orchestra began to play.	CONSISTENT SHIFTED

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 consistent verb time and one sentence with an unneeded verb-time shift.

CONSISTENT _____

SHIFTED _____

CHALLENGE

Combine these two sentences into one sentence with varied syntax. Keep all verbs in present tense: The librarian unlocks the door. The students enter quietly.

ANSWER KEY

Time Shift Detectives

GRADE 10 · 10.L.GC.2.b

PART 1 · SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	The bell rang, and students gathered their materials.	**CONSISTENT**	Both main verbs, rang and gathered, are in past tense.
2	Each spring, the creek floods and covers the path.	**CONSISTENT**	Both verbs, floods and covers, are in present tense for a repeated action.
3	Yesterday, the robot rolled forward and stops at the wall.	**SHIFTED**	Yesterday calls for past tense, but stops is present tense.
4	On Saturday, I painted the fence and cleaned the garage.	**CONSISTENT**	Both verbs, painted and cleaned, are in past tense.
5	Last night, we debated the plan and choose a leader.	**SHIFTED**	Last night calls for past tense, but choose is present tense.
6	During rehearsal, the actors memorized lines and practice entrances.	**SHIFTED**	The past-tense verb memorized shifts without reason to the present-tense verb practice.
7	At noon, the whistle blew, and the runners sprinted toward the gate.	**CONSISTENT**	Both verbs, blew and sprinted, are in past tense.
8	The conductor raised her baton, and the orchestra began to play.	**CONSISTENT**	Both main actions, raised and began, are in past tense.

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)

- **CONSISTENT**: The chef sliced the peppers and stirred the soup.
- **SHIFTED**: The drummer tapped the beat and drops a stick.

Challenge: After the librarian unlocks the door, the students enter quietly.

Accept any explanation that names the deciding feature from the rule box for the chosen item. For Part 2, accept explanations that identify the verb forms and connect them to a time clue, such as yesterday or last night. A verb-time shift can be correct when a sentence clearly signals a different time, but these shifted items do not.