Comma Clue Sort

Decide whether added information is essential or extra.

12.L.GC.1 "Grammar, Usage, & Mechanics: Draw from knowledge of the conventions of Standard English grammar, usage, and mechanics when analyzing, evaluating, and constructing texts."

NAME _____ DATE _____

ESSENTIAL DETAIL

An essential detail identifies which person, place, or thing you mean. Do not set it off with commas.

The telescope that detects infrared light can reveal cool stars.

EXTRA DETAIL

An extra detail adds information about a person, place, or thing already identified. Set it off with commas.

The sculpture, which faces the plaza, survived the storm.

1 SORT

8 items

For each sentence, circle ESSENTIAL or EXTRA, then choose two numbered sentences and explain in 1–2 sentences each why the detail is essential or extra.

1.	The proposal that includes a timeline will receive priority review.	ESSENTIAL EXTRA
2.	Our principal, who previously taught chemistry, introduced the speaker.	ESSENTIAL EXTRA
3.	The Cassini mission, which studied Saturn for thirteen years, ended in 2017.	ESSENTIAL EXTRA
4.	Applicants who submit portfolios may interview in April.	ESSENTIAL EXTRA
5.	The evidence that the reporter uncovered changed the verdict.	ESSENTIAL EXTRA
6.	Any device that stores personal data needs encryption.	ESSENTIAL EXTRA
7.	Lake Baikal, which contains about one-fifth of Earth's unfrozen surface fresh water, lies in Siberia.	ESSENTIAL EXTRA
8.	Professor Alvarez, whose article won the award, will lead the seminar.	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 detail and one sentence with an extra detail, using commas correctly.

ESSENTIAL _____

EXTRA _____

CHALLENGE

Choose an EXTRA sentence from Part 1 and rewrite it so its added information becomes essential, changing the noun phrase and punctuation as needed.

ANSWER KEY # Comma Clue Sort

GRADE 12 · 12.L.GC.1

PART 1 · SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	The proposal that includes a timeline will receive priority review.	**ESSENTIAL**	The clause identifies which proposals will receive priority review.
2	Our principal, who previously taught chemistry, introduced the speaker.	**EXTRA**	The clause adds information about the already identified principal.
3	The Cassini mission, which studied Saturn for thirteen years, ended in 2017.	**EXTRA**	The clause adds information about the already identified Cassini mission.
4	Applicants who submit portfolios may interview in April.	**ESSENTIAL**	The clause identifies which applicants may interview.
5	The evidence that the reporter uncovered changed the verdict.	**ESSENTIAL**	The clause identifies which evidence changed the verdict.
6	Any device that stores personal data needs encryption.	**ESSENTIAL**	The clause identifies the devices that need encryption.
7	Lake Baikal, which contains about one-fifth of Earth's unfrozen surface fresh water, lies in Siberia.	**EXTRA**	The clause adds information about the already identified lake.
8	Professor Alvarez, whose article won the award, will lead the seminar.	**EXTRA**	The clause adds information about the already identified professor.

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 route that crosses the canyon closes after sunset.
- **EXTRA**: Nadia, who restored the mural, spoke at the ceremony.

Challenge: The lake that contains about one-fifth of Earth's unfrozen surface fresh water lies in Siberia.

Accept any explanation that names the deciding feature from the rule box for the chosen item. Essential details identify a subset and have no commas. Extra details add information about an already identified noun and are set off with commas; accept equivalent student-created examples with correct punctuation.