Sentence Structure Sleuths

Spot compound and complex sentences.

3.L.GC.2.a "Distinguish between correctly structured simple, compound, and complex sentences. (I)"

NAME _____ DATE _____

COMPOUND SENTENCE

A compound sentence has two complete sentences joined by a joining word, such as and, but, or so.

The acrobat spun, and the audience clapped.

COMPLEX SENTENCE

A complex sentence has one complete sentence and one part that cannot stand alone. It often uses words such as because, when, or if.

After the bell rang, everyone hurried outside.

1 SORT

8 items

For Part 1, circle the tag for each sentence, then for Part 2, choose two numbers and explain which clue showed the sentence type.

1.	The turtle moved slowly, but the rabbit raced ahead.	COMPOUND COMPLEX
2.	When the rain stopped, we walked to the creek.	COMPOUND COMPLEX
3.	I packed my lunch because we were visiting the museum.	COMPOUND COMPLEX
4.	Maya drew a map, so her brother found the trail.	COMPOUND COMPLEX
5.	The stars appeared, and the campers grew quiet.	COMPOUND COMPLEX
6.	If the oven beeps, Dad will take out the bread.	COMPOUND COMPLEX
7.	Nora washed the paintbrushes, and Eli stacked the cups.	COMPOUND COMPLEX
8.	The kite dipped when the wind changed.	COMPOUND COMPLEX

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 compound sentence and one new complex sentence.

COMPOUND _____

COMPLEX _____

CHALLENGE

Change this compound sentence into a complex sentence: The gate opened, and the children ran inside.

ANSWER KEY

Sentence Structure Sleuths

GRADE 3 · 3.L.GC.2.a

PART 1 · SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	The turtle moved slowly, but the rabbit raced ahead.	**COMPOUND**	Two complete clauses are joined by but.
2	When the rain stopped, we walked to the creek.	**COMPLEX**	When the rain stopped cannot stand alone.
3	I packed my lunch because we were visiting the museum.	**COMPLEX**	Because we were visiting the museum is a dependent clause.
4	Maya drew a map, so her brother found the trail.	**COMPOUND**	Two complete clauses are joined by so.
5	The stars appeared, and the campers grew quiet.	**COMPOUND**	Two complete clauses are joined by and.
6	If the oven beeps, Dad will take out the bread.	**COMPLEX**	If the oven beeps cannot stand alone.
7	Nora washed the paintbrushes, and Eli stacked the cups.	**COMPOUND**	Two complete clauses are joined by and.
8	The kite dipped when the wind changed.	**COMPLEX**	When the wind changed is a dependent clause.

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)

- **COMPOUND**: The violinist bowed, and the crowd cheered.
- **COMPLEX**: Because the path was icy, the hikers walked slowly.

Challenge: When the gate opened, the children ran inside.

Accept any explanation that names the deciding feature from the rule box for the chosen item. For Part 2, students should identify two complete clauses joined by a joining word for a compound sentence, or identify the part that cannot stand alone for a complex sentence.