

Tense Time Detectives

Sort sentences by whether their verbs stay in one time.

4.L.GC.2.b "Use a variety of simple, compound, and complex sentences to strengthen clarity and coherence, maintaining consistent verb tense within and between paragraphs. (C)"

NAME _____

DATE _____

STEADY TENSE

The verbs stay in the same time, such as past, present, or future. Use this when the actions belong in the same time.

Omar carried an atlas home. Afterward, he placed it beside a lamp.

TENSE SHIFT

A verb changes to a different time without a reason. When the actions belong in the same time, the verbs should match.

Every dawn, Priya feeds a parrot and cleaned its cage.

1 SORT _____ 8 items

Circle STEADY or SHIFT for each sentence, then choose two items and explain which verbs show steady tense or a tense shift.

- | | | |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Last Friday, Noor painted a sign and hung it by the door. | ☐ STEADY | ☐ SHIFT |
| 2. Eli mixes the batter, then he poured it into the pan. | ☐ STEADY | ☐ SHIFT |
| 3. The campers gathered sticks, and they roast marshmallows. | ☐ STEADY | ☐ SHIFT |
| 4. Because the path was icy, the hikers moved slowly. | ☐ STEADY | ☐ SHIFT |
| 5. Our class will visit the museum, and we will sketch the fossils. | ☐ STEADY | ☐ SHIFT |
| 6. I look under the couch and found my missing mitten. | ☐ STEADY | ☐ SHIFT |
| 7. After the rain stopped, bright puddles reflected the clouds. | ☐ STEADY | ☐ SHIFT |
| 8. Tara opens her notebook, but she writes the date on the wrong page. | ☐ STEADY | ☐ SHIFT |

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 STEADY sentence and one new SHIFT sentence.

STEADY _____

SHIFT _____

CHALLENGE

Write a two-sentence paragraph about a made-up after-school activity. Use one compound sentence and keep all verbs in past tense.

PART 1 • SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	Last Friday, Noor painted a sign and hung it by the door.	STEADY	Both verbs, painted and hung, are in past tense.
2	Eli mixes the batter, then he poured it into the pan.	SHIFT	Mixes is present tense, but poured is past tense.
3	The campers gathered sticks, and they roast marshmallows.	SHIFT	Gathered is past tense, but roast is present tense.
4	Because the path was icy, the hikers moved slowly.	STEADY	Was and moved are both in past tense.
5	Our class will visit the museum, and we will sketch the fossils.	STEADY	Both verbs use future tense.
6	I look under the couch and found my missing mitten.	SHIFT	Look is present tense, but found is past tense.
7	After the rain stopped, bright puddles reflected the clouds.	STEADY	Stopped and reflected are both in past tense.
8	Tara opens her notebook, but she writes the date on the wrong page.	STEADY	Opens and writes are both in present 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)

- **STEADY:** My cousins will build a kite, and they will fly it in a field.
- **SHIFT:** The robot rolls across a table, then it bumped into a cup.

Challenge: After practice, Jordan packed the cones, and he swept the gym floor. He locked the equipment closet before he bicycled home.

Sort answers: 1, 4, 5, 7, and 8 are STEADY. Items 2, 3, and 6 are SHIFT. For Part 2, accept explanations that name matching verb tenses or identify the two different tenses.