Tense Time Detectives

Track whether verbs stay in the same time.

5.L.GC.2.b "Use a variety of simple, compound, and complex sentences to strengthen clarity and coherence, maintaining consistent verb tense throughout the entire text. (C)"

NAME _____ DATE _____

CONSISTENT VERB TENSE

The verbs stay in the same time, such as past or present. This helps readers follow the action.

Jordan washed the bicycle and dried the seat.

UNPLANNED TENSE SHIFT

The verbs jump from one time to another without a reason. This can confuse readers.

The squirrel climbed the fence, but it searches for an acorn.

1 SORT

8 items

Circle CONSISTENT or SHIFTED for each sentence, then choose two items and explain which verbs showed you the answer.

1. Maya planted beans and watered them after school. CONSISTENT SHIFTED

2. The hikers crossed the bridge before they reached camp. CONSISTENT SHIFTED

3. Our robot rolled across the floor, then it bumps into a chair. CONSISTENT SHIFTED

4. When the bell rang, students opened their notebooks. CONSISTENT SHIFTED

5. Leo sketches a dragon, and he colored its wings. CONSISTENT SHIFTED

6. After the rain stopped, the puddles reflect the clouds. CONSISTENT SHIFTED

7. Nina mixed batter, then placed the pan in the oven. CONSISTENT SHIFTED

8. The baby laughed because the puppy chases its tail. 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 new CONSISTENT sentence and one new SHIFTED sentence.

CONSISTENT _____

SHIFTED _____

CHALLENGE

Write a three-sentence story in past tense with one simple sentence, one compound sentence, and one complex sentence.

ANSWER KEY

Tense Time Detectives

GRADE 5 · 5.L.GC.2.b

PART 1 · SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	Maya planted beans and watered them after school.	**CONSISTENT**	Both planted and watered are past-tense verbs.
2	The hikers crossed the bridge before they reached camp.	**CONSISTENT**	Both crossed and reached are past-tense verbs.
3	Our robot rolled across the floor, then it bumps into a chair.	**SHIFTED**	Rolled is past tense, but bumps is present tense.
4	When the bell rang, students opened their notebooks.	**CONSISTENT**	Both rang and opened are past-tense verbs.
5	Leo sketches a dragon, and he colored its wings.	**SHIFTED**	Sketches is present tense, but colored is past tense.
6	After the rain stopped, the puddles reflect the clouds.	**SHIFTED**	Stopped is past tense, but reflect is present tense.
7	Nina mixed batter, then placed the pan in the oven.	**CONSISTENT**	Mixed and placed are both past-tense verbs.
8	The baby laughed because the puppy chases its tail.	**SHIFTED**	Laughed is past tense, but chases is 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)

- **CONSISTENT**: The painter cleaned the brush and closed the jar.
- **SHIFTED**: Tara jumped rope, then she trips on a stone.

Challenge: The fox rested beneath a tree. It heard a rustle, and it lifted its ears. When the wind calmed, the fox trotted toward the creek.

Accept any explanation that names the deciding feature from the rule box for the chosen item. Accept proof statements that name the verbs and correctly identify their tenses. In Part 3, accept any clear examples that either keep one tense throughout or intentionally shift between tenses.