Hyphen Position Patrol

See where a compound description belongs.

6.L.GC.1.51 "Mechanics: Use hyphens with appropriate affixes and compound words. (Introduce)"

NAME _____ DATE _____

HYPHEN NEEDED

Use a hyphen when two words join to describe a noun that comes right after them.

a three-legged stool

NO HYPHEN NEEDED

Do not use a hyphen when the same kind of description comes after a noun or verb instead of directly before a noun.

The turtle is ten years old.

1 SORT

8 items

For each numbered item, circle HYPHEN or NO HYPHEN, then choose two items for Part 2 and explain whether the description comes before a noun or after the noun or verb.

1.	a well-known scientist	HYPHEN	NO HYPHEN
2.	The scientist is well known.	HYPHEN	NO HYPHEN
3.	a five-mile hike	HYPHEN	NO HYPHEN
4.	a high-speed train	HYPHEN	NO HYPHEN
5.	The train traveled at high speed.	HYPHEN	NO HYPHEN
6.	a family-owned store	HYPHEN	NO HYPHEN
7.	The hike was five miles long.	HYPHEN	NO HYPHEN
8.	a time-saving tool	HYPHEN	NO HYPHEN

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 two-word description before a noun for HYPHEN and one new use of a two-word description after a noun or verb for NO HYPHEN.

HYPHEN _____

NO HYPHEN _____

CHALLENGE

Rewrite this sentence so the description comes after the noun: The gardener used a twenty-foot ladder. Make any needed hyphen change.

ANSWER KEY

Hyphen Position Patrol

GRADE 6 · 6.L.GC.1.51

PART 1 · SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	a well-known scientist	**HYPHEN**	Well-known is a two-word description placed before the noun scientist.
2	The scientist is well known.	**NO HYPHEN**	Well known comes after the noun and linking verb is.
3	a five-mile hike	**HYPHEN**	Five-mile works as one description before the noun hike.
4	a high-speed train	**HYPHEN**	High-speed works as one description before the noun train.
5	The train traveled at high speed.	**NO HYPHEN**	High speed follows the verb traveled, not a noun it describes.
6	a family-owned store	**HYPHEN**	Family-owned works as one description before the noun store.
7	The hike was five miles long.	**NO HYPHEN**	Five miles long comes after the noun hike and linking verb was.
8	a time-saving tool	**HYPHEN**	Time-saving works as one description before the noun tool.

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)

- **HYPHEN**: a long-distance call
- **NO HYPHEN**: The call was long distance.

Challenge: The ladder was twenty feet tall.

Accept any explanation that names the deciding feature from the rule box for the chosen item. For Part 2, students should explain that a hyphen joins words used together before a noun, while the same idea after a noun or verb does not use a hyphen. Accept correct original examples that clearly show the same position rule.