Punctuation Patrol

Spot punctuation that surrounds extra details.

7.L.GC.1.49 "Mechanics: Use commas, parentheses, and dashes to set off nonessential words, phrases, or clauses. (Master)"

NAME _____ DATE _____

COMPLETE

A nonessential detail gives extra information. In a COMPLETE sentence, matching commas, parentheses, or dashes separate the detail from the rest of the sentence.

Jordan (an avid astronomer) visited the observatory.

INCOMPLETE

In an INCOMPLETE sentence, a nonessential detail is missing punctuation on one side or is not fully separated from the sentence.

The mango, ripe and sweet filled the basket.

1 SORT

8 items

For each sentence, circle COMPLETE or INCOMPLETE, then choose two sentences and explain which punctuation marks, or missing marks, helped you decide.

1. The astronaut, tired after training, waved to the crowd. COMPLETE INCOMPLETE
2. The recipe (from my aunt) makes twelve cookies. COMPLETE INCOMPLETE
3. The bicycle, with a broken chain rolled into the garage. COMPLETE INCOMPLETE
4. The volcano--silent for centuries--stood above the island. COMPLETE INCOMPLETE
5. Our neighbor (a skilled carpenter built a treehouse. COMPLETE INCOMPLETE
6. The puppy, despite its small size, barked loudly. COMPLETE INCOMPLETE
7. The river--after the storm overflowed its banks. COMPLETE INCOMPLETE
8. The coach, who had played professionally called a timeout. COMPLETE INCOMPLETE

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 COMPLETE sentence with a nonessential detail set off correctly. Then write one INCOMPLETE sentence with a nonessential detail that is missing needed punctuation.

COMPLETE _____

INCOMPLETE _____

CHALLENGE

Correct your INCOMPLETE sentence, then write the same nonessential detail using a different kind of punctuation.

ANSWER KEY

Punctuation Patrol

GRADE 7 · 7.L.GC.1.49

PART 1 · SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	The astronaut, tired after training, waved to the crowd.	**COMPLETE**	The nonessential phrase "tired after training" is set off by commas on both sides.
2	The recipe (from my aunt) makes twelve cookies.	**COMPLETE**	The nonessential phrase is enclosed by opening and closing parentheses.
3	The bicycle, with a broken chain rolled into the garage.	**INCOMPLETE**	The nonessential phrase needs a comma after "chain."
4	The volcano--silent for centuries--stood above the island.	**COMPLETE**	The nonessential phrase is set off by a dash on each side.
5	Our neighbor (a skilled carpenter built a treehouse.	**INCOMPLETE**	The nonessential phrase is missing a closing parenthesis.
6	The puppy, despite its small size, barked loudly.	**COMPLETE**	The nonessential phrase is set off by commas on both sides.
7	The river--after the storm overflowed its banks.	**INCOMPLETE**	The nonessential phrase needs a second dash after "storm."
8	The coach, who had played professionally called a timeout.	**INCOMPLETE**	The nonessential clause needs a comma after "professionally."

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)

- **COMPLETE**: The parade, which began at noon, passed our school.
- **INCOMPLETE**: My uncle (an expert photographer took pictures at the festival.

Challenge: My uncle (an expert photographer) took pictures at the festival. My uncle, an expert photographer, took pictures at the festival.

Accept double hyphens as dashes in these plain-text sentences. In each COMPLETE item, the extra detail can be removed and the remaining sentence still makes sense.