Colon Detective Sort

Decide when a colon belongs.

7.L.GC.1.56 "Mechanics: Use colons to introduce lists, examples, and explanations. (Introduce)"

NAME _____ DATE _____

WORKS	DOES NOT WORK
The colon comes after a complete thought. It introduces a list, an example, or an explanation. The gardener needed four tools: a spade, shears, gloves, and a hose.	The colon interrupts the sentence instead of introducing something after a complete thought. The gardener needed: a spade, shears, gloves, and a hose.

1 SORT

8 items

For Part 1, circle CORRECT or INCORRECT for each sentence.

1.	Pack these supplies: a notebook, a ruler, and glue.	CORRECT INCORRECT
2.	The team agreed on one goal: practice daily.	CORRECT INCORRECT
3.	The coach handed out: jerseys and water bottles.	CORRECT INCORRECT
4.	My favorite weekend activities are: baking, hiking, and drawing.	CORRECT INCORRECT
5.	The trail had one problem: a fallen tree blocked the bridge.	CORRECT INCORRECT
6.	After the bell rang: students entered the room.	CORRECT INCORRECT
7.	The signs gave one warning: thin ice ahead.	CORRECT INCORRECT
8.	The sky changed quickly: dark clouds covered the sun.	CORRECT INCORRECT

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 sentence with a correct colon and one new sentence with an incorrect colon.

CORRECT

INCORRECT

CHALLENGE

Write a two-sentence mini-scene that uses one colon correctly to introduce an explanation and does not use any incorrect colons.

ANSWER KEY

Colon Detective Sort

GRADE 7 · 7.L.GC.1.56

PART 1 · SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	Pack these supplies: a notebook, a ruler, and glue.	**CORRECT**	The words before the colon form a complete sentence, and the colon introduces a list.
2	The team agreed on one goal: practice daily.	**CORRECT**	The complete thought before the colon is followed by an explanation of the goal.
3	The coach handed out: jerseys and water bottles.	**INCORRECT**	The colon separates the verb phrase "handed out" from its objects.
4	My favorite weekend activities are: baking, hiking, and drawing.	**INCORRECT**	The colon comes directly after the linking verb "are."
5	The trail had one problem: a fallen tree blocked the bridge.	**CORRECT**	The complete thought before the colon is followed by an explanation of the problem.
6	After the bell rang: students entered the room.	**INCORRECT**	The words before the colon are a dependent clause, not a complete thought.
7	The signs gave one warning: thin ice ahead.	**CORRECT**	The complete thought before the colon introduces the warning.
8	The sky changed quickly: dark clouds covered the sun.	**CORRECT**	The complete thought before the colon is followed by an explanation of how the sky changed.

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)

- **CORRECT**: The aquarium has one rule: keep hands away from the tanks.
- **INCORRECT**: The aquarium has: a rule about keeping hands away from the tanks.

Challenge: Lena stopped at the gate for one reason: the sign said the park was closed. She turned around and walked home.

Answers: 1 CORRECT, 2 CORRECT, 3 INCORRECT, 4 INCORRECT, 5 CORRECT, 6 INCORRECT, 7 CORRECT, 8 CORRECT. In Part 2, students should explain whether the words before the colon are a complete thought and whether the colon introduces a list, example, or explanation.