

Semicolon Sleuth

Sort sentences by how they use a semicolon.

8.L.GC.1.52 "Mechanics: Use semicolons, with or without a conjunctive adverb, to form compound and compound-complex sentences. (Master)"

NAME _____

DATE _____

CORRECT SEMICOLON USE

A semicolon joins two closely related complete sentences. A conjunctive adverb can follow the semicolon, and it needs a comma after it.

The orchestra tuned its instruments;
consequently, the audience settled quietly.

INCORRECT SEMICOLON USE

The semicolon is not correctly joining two complete sentences. A dependent clause, a phrase, or a simple list cannot stand alone on one side.

Before sunrise; farmers loaded crates.

1 SORT _____ 8 items

For Part 1, circle the category for each sentence; for Part 2, choose two items and explain how the sentence structure makes each use correct or incorrect.

- | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Maya finished the model; her partner checked the labels. | ☐ CORRECT | ☐ INCORRECT |
| 2. The sky darkened; therefore, the game ended early. | ☐ CORRECT | ☐ INCORRECT |
| 3. Since the gate was locked; we waited outside. | ☐ CORRECT | ☐ INCORRECT |
| 4. While the oven warmed, Dad mixed the batter; the children set the table. | ☐ CORRECT | ☐ INCORRECT |
| 5. The librarian placed; the novels on a cart. | ☐ CORRECT | ☐ INCORRECT |
| 6. Our supplies included pencils; paper, glue, and rulers. | ☐ CORRECT | ☐ INCORRECT |
| 7. Jalen studied all week; he felt ready for the quiz. | ☐ CORRECT | ☐ INCORRECT |
| 8. After lunch ended; everyone returned to class. | ☐ 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 semicolon use and one new sentence with an incorrect semicolon use.

CORRECT _____

INCORRECT _____

CHALLENGE

Write a compound-complex sentence that correctly uses a semicolon and a conjunctive adverb.

PART 1 • SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	Maya finished the model; her partner checked the labels.	CORRECT	Both sides are complete sentences.
2	The sky darkened; therefore, the game ended early.	CORRECT	The semicolon joins two complete sentences, and therefore is followed by a comma.
3	Since the gate was locked; we waited outside.	INCORRECT	Since the gate was locked is a dependent clause, not a complete sentence.
4	While the oven warmed, Dad mixed the batter; the children set the table.	CORRECT	The semicolon joins two complete sentences. The first sentence includes a dependent clause.
5	The librarian placed; the novels on a cart.	INCORRECT	The librarian placed is incomplete because it needs an object.
6	Our supplies included pencils; paper, glue, and rulers.	INCORRECT	The semicolon incorrectly separates items in a simple list.
7	Jalen studied all week; he felt ready for the quiz.	CORRECT	Both sides are complete sentences.
8	After lunch ended; everyone returned to class.	INCORRECT	After lunch ended is a dependent clause, not a complete sentence.

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 actors rehearsed for hours; the director watched from the balcony.
- **INCORRECT:** Because the river flooded; the campers changed plans.

Challenge: When the final whistle sounded, the crowd cheered; however, the officials reviewed the last play.

Correct: 1, 2, 4, and 7. Incorrect: 3, 5, 6, and 8. Accept explanations that identify whether both sides of the semicolon are complete sentences.