Dash Detectives

In this worksheet, -- represents a dash.

8.L.GC.1.60 "Mechanics: Use dashes appropriately. (Introduce)"

NAME _____ DATE _____

DASH USED WELL

A dash can set off extra information or show a sudden interruption or change in thought.

The museum -- built in 1905 -- reopened today.

DASH MISUSED

A dash is misused when it only breaks apart sentence parts that belong together.

The candles -- flickered in the dark.

1 SORT

8 items

Circle CORRECT or INCORRECT for each sentence, then in Part 2 choose two items and explain why each dash fits or is misused.

1.	The final clue -- hidden beneath the map -- solved the mystery.	CORRECT INCORRECT
2.	I thought the door was locked -- wait, it is open!	CORRECT INCORRECT
3.	The runners -- crossed the finish line.	CORRECT INCORRECT
4.	Our oldest tree -- a towering oak -- lost a branch.	CORRECT INCORRECT
5.	My cousin enjoys -- painting landscapes.	CORRECT INCORRECT
6.	The recipe -- printed on a faded card -- came from my grandmother.	CORRECT INCORRECT
7.	The lights went out -- everyone froze.	CORRECT INCORRECT
8.	We packed -- snacks, water, and flashlights.	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 dash and one new sentence with an INCORRECT dash.

CORRECT _____

INCORRECT _____

CHALLENGE

Revise the INCORRECT sentence you wrote so it has a correctly used dash, then write one sentence explaining the change.

ANSWER KEY # Dash Detectives

GRADE 8 · 8.L.GC.1.60

PART 1 · SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	The final clue -- hidden beneath the map -- solved the mystery.	**CORRECT**	The pair of dashes sets off extra information about the clue.
2	I thought the door was locked -- wait, it is open!	**CORRECT**	The dash shows an abrupt interruption in the thought.
3	The runners -- crossed the finish line.	**INCORRECT**	The dash incorrectly separates the subject from its verb.
4	Our oldest tree -- a towering oak -- lost a branch.	**CORRECT**	The pair of dashes sets off extra information about the tree.
5	My cousin enjoys -- painting landscapes.	**INCORRECT**	The dash incorrectly separates the verb from what the cousin enjoys doing.
6	The recipe -- printed on a faded card -- came from my grandmother.	**CORRECT**	The pair of dashes sets off extra information about the recipe.
7	The lights went out -- everyone froze.	**CORRECT**	The dash creates emphasis between two complete thoughts and shows a sudden event.
8	We packed -- snacks, water, and flashlights.	**INCORRECT**	The dash incorrectly separates the verb from its object.

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 canoe -- bright red and slightly worn -- drifted beside the dock.
- **INCORRECT**: The baker -- mixed the dough.

Challenge: The baker mixed the dough -- the oven suddenly stopped working. The dash now separates two complete thoughts and shows an abrupt turn.

Accept any explanation that names the deciding feature from the rule box for the chosen item. In Part 2, accept explanations that identify extra information, an interruption, or sentence parts incorrectly split by a dash. For Part 3, check that the CORRECT sentence uses a dash appropriately and the INCORRECT sentence clearly misuses one.