

Dash Job Detective

Decide when a dash earns its place.

9.L.GC.1.60 "Mechanics: Use dashes appropriately. (Continue)"

NAME _____

DATE _____

DASH IS CORRECT

In this worksheet, a spaced hyphen (-) stands for a dash. A correct dash creates a strong break or sets off extra interrupting words.

The canyon held a secret - an ancient carving.

DASH IS INCORRECT

An incorrect dash splits parts that should stay together, such as a verb and what follows it. It may also appear where no strong break is needed.

The painter - mixed blue paint.

1 SORT _____ 8 items

Circle CORRECT or INCORRECT for each sentence; then, for Part 2, choose two item numbers and explain what makes each dash correct or incorrect.

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| 1. The library closed early - a broken pipe had flooded the lobby. | <input type="button" value="CORRECT"/> | <input type="button" value="INCORRECT"/> |
| <hr/> | | |
| 2. My favorite snack - salted popcorn - was sold out. | <input type="button" value="CORRECT"/> | <input type="button" value="INCORRECT"/> |
| <hr/> | | |
| 3. We packed - blankets, water, and maps for the hike. | <input type="button" value="CORRECT"/> | <input type="button" value="INCORRECT"/> |
| <hr/> | | |
| 4. The team had one goal - to finish the mural before Friday. | <input type="button" value="CORRECT"/> | <input type="button" value="INCORRECT"/> |
| <hr/> | | |
| 5. The violinist played - softly during the solo. | <input type="button" value="CORRECT"/> | <input type="button" value="INCORRECT"/> |
| <hr/> | | |
| 6. I remembered - that the museum opens at ten. | <input type="button" value="CORRECT"/> | <input type="button" value="INCORRECT"/> |
| <hr/> | | |
| 7. Only one person knew the answer - Jordan. | <input type="button" value="CORRECT"/> | <input type="button" value="INCORRECT"/> |
| <hr/> | | |
| 8. The path - hidden behind tall reeds - led to the lake. | <input type="button" value="CORRECT"/> | <input type="button" value="INCORRECT"/> |
| <hr/> | | |

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 correctly used dash and one new sentence with an incorrectly used dash. Label each sentence CORRECT or INCORRECT.

CORRECT

INCORRECT

CHALLENGE

Write a two-sentence mini-scene. In the second sentence, use a correctly placed pair of dashes to add an interruption, then copy the interruption after the sentence in brackets.

PART 1 • SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	The library closed early - a broken pipe had flooded the lobby.	CORRECT	The dash introduces an explanation for the early closing.
2	My favorite snack - salted popcorn - was sold out.	CORRECT	The paired dashes set off extra information that renames the snack.
3	We packed - blankets, water, and maps for the hike.	INCORRECT	The dash incorrectly separates the verb "packed" from its direct objects.
4	The team had one goal - to finish the mural before Friday.	CORRECT	The dash introduces an explanation of the team's goal.
5	The violinist played - softly during the solo.	INCORRECT	The dash incorrectly separates the verb "played" from the adverb "softly."
6	I remembered - that the museum opens at ten.	INCORRECT	The dash incorrectly separates "remembered" from the clause that completes its meaning.
7	Only one person knew the answer - Jordan.	CORRECT	The dash introduces an emphatic identification of the person.
8	The path - hidden behind tall reeds - led to the lake.	CORRECT	The paired dashes set off extra descriptive information about the path.

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 concert had one surprise - a guest drummer.
- **INCORRECT:** The concert - began at noon.

Challenge: The power failed without warning. Nia - nervous but prepared - switched on her lantern. [nervous but prepared]

For Part 2, accept any two choices if the student identifies the dash's job or identifies the sentence parts that the dash incorrectly separates. The spaced hyphens represent dashes because the worksheet is plain text.