Verb Time Detectives

Track verb forms that stay steady or slip.

9.L.GC.2.b "Compose texts with varied syntax, reshaping sentences for effect while maintaining consistency of verb tenses, aspects, and moods. (C)"

NAME _____ DATE _____

STEADY VERB FORMS

The verbs keep a logical, consistent tense, aspect, and mood. If the time changes, the verb forms correctly show that relationship.

At dawn, the baker mixed dough, shaped loaves, and warmed the oven.

SHIFTED VERB FORMS

One verb changes tense, aspect, or mood for no clear reason. The unexpected change makes the sentence unclear or incorrect.

The actor rehearses the scene, then forgot a line.

1 SORT

8 items

Circle STEADY or SHIFTED for each item, then choose two items and explain how the verbs show a consistent form or an unneeded shift.

1.	Each morning, the custodian unlocks the doors, checks the lights, and greets early arrivals.	STEADY SHIFTED
2.	The violinist had tuned her instrument before the concert started.	STEADY SHIFTED
3.	The hikers reached the lake and set up camp before the rain begins.	STEADY SHIFTED
4.	Although the road was icy, Maya drove slowly and arrived safely.	STEADY SHIFTED
5.	To save energy, the library dims its lights after closing.	STEADY SHIFTED
6.	Tomorrow, the players will gather near the bench and reviewed the plan.	STEADY SHIFTED
7.	The chef prepared the sauce, tasted it, and added more herbs.	STEADY SHIFTED
8.	Please place the folders on the desk and stapled the packets.	STEADY SHIFTED

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 original sentence with STEADY verb forms and one original sentence with SHIFTED verb forms.

STEADY _____

SHIFTED _____

CHALLENGE

Combine these two sentences into one sentence with varied syntax, while keeping both verbs in past tense: "The wind rose. The sailors secured the ropes."

ANSWER KEY

Verb Time Detectives

GRADE 9 · 9.L.GC.2.b

PART 1 · SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	Each morning, the custodian unlocks the doors, checks the lights, and greets early arrivals.	**STEADY**	All three verbs are in consistent present tense.
2	The violinist had tuned her instrument before the concert started.	**STEADY**	Past perfect correctly shows the tuning happened before the past concert.
3	The hikers reached the lake and set up camp before the rain begins.	**SHIFTED**	The sentence shifts unexpectedly from past tense to present tense.
4	Although the road was icy, Maya drove slowly and arrived safely.	**STEADY**	Both main verbs are in past tense.
5	To save energy, the library dims its lights after closing.	**STEADY**	The sentence consistently describes a present routine.
6	Tomorrow, the players will gather near the bench and reviewed the plan.	**SHIFTED**	The second verb incorrectly shifts from future to past tense.
7	The chef prepared the sauce, tasted it, and added more herbs.	**STEADY**	All three verbs are in past tense.
8	Please place the folders on the desk and stapled the packets.	**SHIFTED**	The sentence shifts from an imperative verb to a past-tense verb.

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)

- **STEADY**: The mechanic inspected the engine and replaced the worn belt.
- **SHIFTED**: The mechanic inspected the engine and replaces the worn belt.

Challenge: As the wind rose, the sailors secured the ropes.

Accept any explanation that names the deciding feature from the rule box for the chosen item. Mark a sentence STEADY when its verb forms accurately show the time relationship, even if the forms are not identical. For Part 2, students should name the relevant verbs and explain the consistency or shift.