Punctuation with Purpose

Sort sentences by what their punctuation does.

6.W.7.a "Punctuation – Using punctuation (e.g., commas, parentheses, dashes) to set off nonrestrictive/parenthetical elements. Using semicolons to connect main clauses and colons to introduce a list or quotation."

NAME _____ DATE _____

JOINS THOUGHTS

A semicolon (;) joins two closely related complete thoughts. Each side could stand alone as a sentence.

The engine sputtered; the pilot checked the fuel gauge.

STARTS A LIST

A colon (:) follows a complete thought and introduces a list.

The gardener planted three herbs: basil, mint, and thyme.

1 SORT

8 items

Circle JOINS or LISTS for each numbered item, then choose two items and explain how you know each answer.

1.	The bell rang; students hurried inside.	JOINS LISTS
2.	Maya sketched a dragon; Leo painted a castle.	JOINS LISTS
3.	Our team needs three supplies: tape, string, and scissors.	JOINS LISTS
4.	The trail was muddy; our boots sank with every step.	JOINS LISTS
5.	The museum displayed several fossils: shells, teeth, and bones.	JOINS LISTS
6.	I packed four snacks: crackers, grapes, cheese, and carrots.	JOINS LISTS
7.	The lights went out; the audience fell silent.	JOINS LISTS
8.	Rain covered the window; the view became blurry.	JOINS LISTS

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 semicolon joining two complete thoughts. Then write one new sentence with a colon introducing a list.

JOINS _____

LISTS _____

CHALLENGE

Write one sentence that uses both a colon to introduce a list and a semicolon to join two complete thoughts.

ANSWER KEY

Punctuation with Purpose

GRADE 6 · 6.W.7.a

PART 1 · SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	The bell rang; students hurried inside.	**JOINS**	The semicolon joins two complete thoughts.
2	Maya sketched a dragon; Leo painted a castle.	**JOINS**	Both sides of the semicolon could stand alone as sentences.
3	Our team needs three supplies: tape, string, and scissors.	**LISTS**	The colon introduces a list of supplies.
4	The trail was muddy; our boots sank with every step.	**JOINS**	The semicolon joins two complete thoughts.
5	The museum displayed several fossils: shells, teeth, and bones.	**LISTS**	The colon introduces a list of fossils.
6	I packed four snacks: crackers, grapes, cheese, and carrots.	**LISTS**	The colon introduces a list of snacks.
7	The lights went out; the audience fell silent.	**JOINS**	Both sides of the semicolon could stand alone as sentences.
8	Rain covered the window; the view became blurry.	**JOINS**	The semicolon joins two complete thoughts.

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)

- **JOINS**: The puppy chased its tail; my brother laughed.
- **LISTS**: We explored three places: a pond, a bridge, and a meadow.

Challenge: The robot carried three tools: a wrench, a brush, and a flashlight; its battery ran low.

For Part 2, acceptable explanations name the punctuation's job. For example, item 1 joins two complete thoughts, while item 3 introduces a list of supplies.