Comma Decision

Does this sentence need a comma?

L.4.2 "When writing: Demonstrate appropriate use of capitalization rules. Use commas and quotation marks to indicate direct speech and quotations for a text. Use a comma before a coordinating conjunction in a compound sentence..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

COMMA NEEDED

Use a comma before "and" or "but" when the words on each side can stand alone as sentences.

The kite soared, but the string snapped.

NO COMMA NEEDED

Do not add a comma when "and" or "but" joins actions that do not make two complete sentences.

A fox trotted and leaped.

1 SORT

8 items

Circle COMMA or NONE for each sentence, then pick two items and explain how you knew.

1. Maya packed her bag and Leo locked the door. COMMA NONE
2. The rain stopped but the field stayed muddy. COMMA NONE
3. Nina washed and dried the dishes. COMMA NONE
4. The bus arrived and our class climbed aboard. COMMA NONE
5. The rabbit hopped and hid under a bush. COMMA NONE
6. Ben drew a map and colored it. COMMA NONE
7. The lights went out but Dad found a flashlight. COMMA NONE
8. Sasha read and shared the poem. COMMA NONE

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 that needs a comma before "and" or "but." Then write one new sentence that does not need that comma.

COMMA _____

NONE _____

CHALLENGE

Write a sentence with two complete thoughts joined by "but." Add the comma and underline each complete thought.

ANSWER KEY

Comma Decision

GRADE 4 · L.4.2

PART 1 · SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	Maya packed her bag and Leo locked the door.	**COMMA**	Both sides of "and" can stand alone as sentences.
2	The rain stopped but the field stayed muddy.	**COMMA**	Both sides of "but" can stand alone as sentences.
3	Nina washed and dried the dishes.	**NONE**	"And" joins two actions by Nina, not two complete sentences.
4	The bus arrived and our class climbed aboard.	**COMMA**	Both sides of "and" can stand alone as sentences.
5	The rabbit hopped and hid under a bush.	**NONE**	"And" joins two actions by the rabbit, not two complete sentences.
6	Ben drew a map and colored it.	**NONE**	"And" joins two actions by Ben, not two complete sentences.
7	The lights went out but Dad found a flashlight.	**COMMA**	Both sides of "but" can stand alone as sentences.
8	Sasha read and shared the poem.	**NONE**	"And" joins two actions by Sasha, not two complete sentences.

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)

- **COMMA**: Tara waved, and the driver smiled.
- **NONE**: Tara waved and smiled.

Challenge: My pencil broke, but I finished with a pen.

For Part 2, accept explanations that test both sides of the joining word. For example, item 2 has two complete thoughts, while item 3 has only one.