Comma or Not?

Sort adjective pairs by the comma they need.

L.7.2 "When writing: Demonstrate appropriate use of a comma to separate coordinate adjectives. Demonstrate appropriate use of strategies and resources (print and electronic) to identify and correct spelling errors."

NAME _____ DATE _____

COMMA NEEDED

Use a comma between adjectives that describe a noun equally. If you can switch their order or put *and* between them, a comma usually belongs there.

a gentle, soothing melody

NO COMMA NEEDED

Do not add a comma when the adjectives do not describe the noun equally. Switching their order will usually sound wrong.

four curious otters

1 SORT

8 items

For each phrase, circle COMMA if it needs a comma between its two describing words or PLAIN if it does not; in Part 2, choose one phrase from each category and explain how the swap or *and* test helped you decide.

1.	a chilly windy afternoon	COMMA	PLAIN
2.	a messy crowded hallway	COMMA	PLAIN
3.	two fluffy rabbits	COMMA	PLAIN
4.	a smooth slippery stone	COMMA	PLAIN
5.	a narrow metal gate	COMMA	PLAIN
6.	five green notebooks	COMMA	PLAIN
7.	a bold surprising choice	COMMA	PLAIN
8.	a loud cheerful crowd	COMMA	PLAIN

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 phrase with two adjectives that need a comma and one new phrase with two adjectives that do not need a comma.

COMMA _____

PLAIN _____

CHALLENGE

Write two sentences about the same place: one with coordinate adjectives separated by a comma and one with two adjectives that do not need a comma.

ANSWER KEY

Comma or Not?

GRADE 7 · L.7.2

PART 1 · SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	a chilly windy afternoon	**COMMA**	Chilly and windy both describe afternoon equally; their order can be switched.
2	a messy crowded hallway	**COMMA**	Messy and crowded both describe hallway equally; 'messy and crowded' works.
3	two fluffy rabbits	**PLAIN**	Two tells how many rabbits; 'fluffy two rabbits' does not work.
4	a smooth slippery stone	**COMMA**	Smooth and slippery both describe stone equally; 'smooth and slippery' works.
5	a narrow metal gate	**PLAIN**	Narrow gives size and metal gives material; 'metal narrow gate' does not work.
6	five green notebooks	**PLAIN**	Five tells how many notebooks; 'green five notebooks' does not work.
7	a bold surprising choice	**COMMA**	Bold and surprising both describe choice equally; their order can be switched.
8	a loud cheerful crowd	**COMMA**	Loud and cheerful both describe crowd equally; 'loud and cheerful' works.

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**: a dusty, cluttered attic
- **PLAIN**: six purple balloons

Challenge: The library had quiet, cozy corners. Its three wooden tables stood by the door.

For Part 2, accept explanations that correctly apply a swap or *and* test to one item from each category. For COMMA items, students should insert a comma between the adjectives.