Fix the Connection

Read a model of semicolons joining related ideas.

10.5.W.11 "Students will write using correct semicolon mechanics."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Number each semicolon in order, underline the complete clauses it separates, and circle any transition word that follows it.

A Second Chance for the Toaster

1. At the community repair café, a line formed before the doors opened. Maya carried a toaster that had stopped heating; her neighbor brought a lamp with a frayed cord. Inside, volunteers sorted tools onto long tables while visitors wrote their names on scraps of paper. Nobody promised a quick fix; each object would be opened, tested, and discussed with its owner. Maya had planned to replace her toaster after breakfast, but the growing pile of discarded appliances at home had changed her mind. If one small repair worked, she could keep another machine out of the trash.

2. A trained volunteer unplugged the toaster and removed its metal cover. The heating wires looked intact; however, a loose connection near the switch caught Maya's eye. The volunteer showed her how the connection could be secured without leaving bare wire against the case. Next, the volunteer replaced the cover and checked the appliance for electrical safety before testing it. The first slice came out pale; the second browned evenly after Maya adjusted the dial. She wrote down what they had tried, because she wanted to remember the steps if the problem returned.

3. By noon, the café's bulletin board held a list of successful repairs. A bicycle bell rang again; a coat zipper slid smoothly after someone cleared its trapped fabric. Not every object could be saved, and the volunteers explained why before anyone left. Maya's toaster worked; therefore, she crossed it off her shopping list. On her way out, she noticed a jar for spare screws and a sign asking visitors to share useful repair stories. She added one sentence about the loose connection, then took her toaster home for tomorrow's breakfast.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. In paragraph 1, write the complete clause on each side of the semicolon in the sentence about Maya and her neighbor.

2. In paragraph 2, what punctuation comes immediately before and after "however"? Why is a semicolon used before it?

3. Rewrite the sentence about Maya's shopping list in paragraph 3 as two sentences. Remove "therefore."

4. In paragraph 1, could the semicolon after "fix" be replaced by a comma alone? Explain.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write three sentences about a school garden project. In one sentence, use a semicolon to join two related complete clauses; in another, use a semicolon followed by "however" or "therefore" and a comma.

ANSWER KEY

Fix the Connection

GRADE 10 · 10.5.W.11

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Number each semicolon in order, underline the complete clauses it separates, and circle any transition word that follows it. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	In paragraph 1, write the complete clause on each side of the semicolon in the sentence about Maya and her neighbor.	**"Maya carried a toaster that had stopped heating" and "her neighbor brought a lamp with a frayed cord."**
2	In paragraph 2, what punctuation comes immediately before and after "however"? Why is a semicolon used before it?	**A semicolon comes before "however," and a comma comes after it. The semicolon joins two complete clauses.**
3	Rewrite the sentence about Maya's shopping list in paragraph 3 as two sentences. Remove "therefore."	**Maya's toaster worked. She crossed it off her shopping list.**
4	In paragraph 1, could the semicolon after "fix" be replaced by a comma alone? Explain.	**No. The words on each side form a complete clause, so a comma alone would create a comma splice.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Our class cleared weeds from the garden beds; another group spread fresh soil. We hoped to plant on Friday; however, heavy rain delayed the work. By Monday, the ground was ready for seeds.

Accept equivalent wording that identifies complete clauses and explains that a comma alone cannot join them. For the open task, check that both semicolons join complete clauses and that the transition is followed by a comma.