The Repair Café

Read a model text and examine two uses of semicolons.

11.5.W.10 "Students will write using correct semicolon mechanics."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the complete clauses on both sides of two semicolons that join clauses. Circle the semicolons that separate the station descriptions, then compare the jobs those marks do.

A Lamp at the Repair Café

1. At the neighborhood repair café, a line formed before the doors opened. Mara brought a lamp that flickered; she hoped someone could find the loose connection. Across the room, volunteers sorted donated screws, thread, and spare buttons into shallow trays. A sign asked visitors to describe each problem before handing over an object; that small pause kept the worktables from becoming a pile of mysteries. Mara wrote that the lamp blinked whenever its cord moved. She did not touch the wiring herself because she did not know how to repair it safely.

2. The volunteers had arranged three stations: textiles, where torn seams could be stitched; bicycles, where brakes could be adjusted; and small appliances, where trained helpers could inspect cords. Mara waited at the last station, watching a volunteer unplug a fan before removing its cover. The fan's owner had expected a costly replacement; instead, the volunteer found a loose screw rattling against the guard. Mara's lamp presented a different problem. Its cord had visible damage; therefore, the volunteer refused to plug it in. He explained that the cord needed replacement before anyone could test the lamp.

3. Mara left without a working lamp; she also left with a clearer plan. The volunteer showed her which part needed replacement and suggested a licensed repair shop for the electrical work. At the bicycle station, a teenager tested a newly adjusted brake in the courtyard, away from the crowded tables. Not every object went home fixed; some needed parts or skills the volunteers did not have. Still, the room felt busy with useful questions. People compared repair options, shared tools, and learned when a problem was too risky to solve on the spot.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. In paragraph 1, copy the clauses on either side of the semicolon in the sentence about Mara bringing a lamp. Why can a semicolon join them?

2. What separates the three station descriptions in paragraph 2? Why would commas alone make the list harder to read?

3. In the sentence beginning “Its cord had visible damage,” why is there a semicolon before “therefore” and a comma after it?

4. Rewrite the paragraph 3 sentence beginning “Not every object” with a period instead of its semicolon. What other change is needed?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write four or five sentences about organizing an event other than a repair café. Use one semicolon to join related complete clauses, and use semicolons to separate at least three list items that each contain a comma.

The Repair Café

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the complete clauses on both sides of two semicolons that join clauses. Circle the semicolons that separate the station descriptions, then compare the jobs those marks do. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	In paragraph 1, copy the clauses on either side of the semicolon in the sentence about Mara bringing a lamp. Why can a semicolon join them?	**"Mara brought a lamp that flickered" and "she hoped someone could find the loose connection" are both complete clauses.**
2	What separates the three station descriptions in paragraph 2? Why would commas alone make the list harder to read?	**Semicolons separate the descriptions. Each description already contains a comma, so semicolons make the boundaries between stations clear.**
3	In the sentence beginning "Its cord had visible damage," why is there a semicolon before "therefore" and a comma after it?	**The semicolon joins two complete clauses. "Therefore" introduces the second clause, and a comma follows it.**
4	Rewrite the paragraph 3 sentence beginning "Not every object" with a period instead of its semicolon. What other change is needed?	**Not every object went home fixed. Some needed parts or skills the volunteers did not have. "Some" must be capitalized.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Our club planned a neighborhood book swap for Saturday. Volunteers collected mysteries, which filled two boxes; cookbooks, which needed a separate shelf; and comics, which drew a crowd before noon. Rain threatened the outdoor tables; we moved the swap into the gym. By closing time, readers had exchanged dozens of books.

For Part 1, accept any two semicolons joining independent clauses, with both clauses underlined, and the two semicolons in the station list circled. For Part 3, check that the response has four or five sentences and uses both required semicolon structures correctly.