Semicolon Sleuth

Test both sides of each semicolon.

6.5.W.11 "Students will use a semicolon to punctuate compound sentences."

NAME _____ DATE _____

CORRECT USE

A semicolon can join two related, complete sentences. Each side must make sense on its own.

Bees buzzed; flowers swayed.

INCORRECT USE

A semicolon is misplaced if either side cannot stand alone as a complete sentence.

Cookies crumbled; in my hands.

1 SORT

8 items

Circle CORRECT or INCORRECT for each numbered item, then choose two items in Part 2 and explain how you knew where they belong.

1. The bell rang; the hallway filled with students. CORRECT INCORRECT

2. Maya packed her bag; her brother checked the map. CORRECT INCORRECT

3. After the rain stopped; we played outside. CORRECT INCORRECT

4. The lights went out; the audience grew quiet. CORRECT INCORRECT

5. The artist chose blue; because it matched the sky. CORRECT INCORRECT

6. The old bridge; crossed the wide river. CORRECT INCORRECT

7. A fox darted across the path; the hikers froze. CORRECT INCORRECT

8. The pond froze overnight; skaters arrived at dawn. CORRECT INCORRECT

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 example with a semicolon used correctly and one with a semicolon used incorrectly; label each CORRECT or INCORRECT.

CORRECT _____

INCORRECT _____

CHALLENGE

Choose one INCORRECT item from Part 1 and rewrite it so the semicolon joins two complete sentences.

ANSWER KEY # Semicolon Sleuth

GRADE 6 · 6.5.W.11

PART 1 · SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	The bell rang; the hallway filled with students.	**CORRECT**	Both sides are complete sentences.
2	Maya packed her bag; her brother checked the map.	**CORRECT**	Both sides are complete sentences.
3	After the rain stopped; we played outside.	**INCORRECT**	The words before the semicolon cannot stand alone.
4	The lights went out; the audience grew quiet.	**CORRECT**	Both sides are complete sentences.
5	The artist chose blue; because it matched the sky.	**INCORRECT**	The words after the semicolon cannot stand alone.
6	The old bridge; crossed the wide river.	**INCORRECT**	Neither side is a complete sentence.
7	A fox darted across the path; the hikers froze.	**CORRECT**	Both sides are complete sentences.
8	The pond froze overnight; skaters arrived at dawn.	**CORRECT**	Both sides are 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)

- **CORRECT**: The wind howled; the windows rattled.
- **INCORRECT**: During the storm; the windows rattled.

Challenge: After the rain stopped, we played outside; our shoes got muddy.

For Part 2, a student might explain that item 3 is incorrect because its first side cannot stand alone, while item 7 is correct because both sides are complete sentences. The challenge sample revises item 3.