Comma Detectives

Sort sentences by the commas in their lists.

7.5.W.7 "Students will use commas to separate words or phrases in a series."

NAME _____ DATE _____

COMMAS IN PLACE

In a list of three or more items, put a comma after each item except the last. Put a comma before and.

Musicians played violins, trumpets, and cymbals.

COMMA MISSING

This sentence has a list, but it needs a comma between two of its items.

Gardeners planted daisies tulips, and ferns.

1 SORT

8 items

For Part 1, circle READY or MISSING for each sentence; for Part 2, choose two items and explain how you knew.

1.	The trail passed cliffs, streams, and caves.	READY MISSING
2.	Mina painted stars, moons, and planets.	READY MISSING
3.	I chose apples bananas, and yogurt.	READY MISSING
4.	Our club collected bottles, cans, and boxes.	READY MISSING
5.	The story had pirates robots, and dragons.	READY MISSING
6.	Jules packed pencils, markers folders, and notebooks.	READY MISSING
7.	We heard whispers, footsteps, and laughter.	READY MISSING
8.	The recipe needs rice, beans, tomatoes, and onions.	READY MISSING

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

For Part 3, write one new READY sentence and one new MISSING sentence, each with a list of at least three items.

READY _____

MISSING _____

CHALLENGE

Write a sentence with a list of four action phrases, and use commas to separate them.

ANSWER KEY # Comma Detectives

GRADE 7 · 7.5.W.7

PART 1 · SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	The trail passed cliffs, streams, and caves.	**READY**	Commas separate all three items, including before and.
2	Mina painted stars, moons, and planets.	**READY**	Commas separate all three items, including before and.
3	I chose apples bananas, and yogurt.	**MISSING**	A comma is needed after apples.
4	Our club collected bottles, cans, and boxes.	**READY**	Commas separate all three items, including before and.
5	The story had pirates robots, and dragons.	**MISSING**	A comma is needed after pirates.
6	Jules packed pencils, markers folders, and notebooks.	**MISSING**	A comma is needed after markers.
7	We heard whispers, footsteps, and laughter.	**READY**	Commas separate all three items, including before and.
8	The recipe needs rice, beans, tomatoes, and onions.	**READY**	Commas separate all four items, including before and.

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)

- **READY**: The bakery sells rolls, pies, and muffins.
- **MISSING**: The aquarium houses sharks rays, and eels.

Challenge: We will climb the hill, cross the bridge, follow the trail, and reach the cabin.

For Part 2, accept explanations that identify the list items and point to a comma that is present or missing. In Part 3, the MISSING sentence should lack a comma between two list items.