Punctuation Detective

Can one mark connect two complete thoughts?

6.LL.19.b "Revise writing for correct mechanics with a focus on commas, apostrophes, quotation marks, colons, and semicolons."

NAME _____ DATE _____

CORRECT

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

Dusk settled; fireflies glowed.

NEEDS REVISION

A comma alone cannot join two complete sentences. Use a semicolon or separate them into two sentences.

Mira stretched, her puppy yawned.

1 SORT

8 items

Circle RIGHT or WRONG for each item, then choose one item from each category and explain how you knew.

1.	Rain tapped the roof; our game moved inside.	RIGHT WRONG
2.	Jaden checked the map; our trail curved left.	RIGHT WRONG
3.	Ava finished her sketch, her pencil snapped.	RIGHT WRONG
4.	The final bell rang, students rushed outside.	RIGHT WRONG
5.	The hallway fell quiet; rehearsal began.	RIGHT WRONG
6.	My kite rose high, its string slipped loose.	RIGHT WRONG
7.	Our team practiced hard; we felt ready.	RIGHT WRONG
8.	The soup smelled spicy; Dad offered a taste.	RIGHT WRONG

2 PROVE IT

Explain your thinking

Choose one item from each category and explain how you knew.

ITEM # _____ **HOW I KNEW** _____

ITEM # _____ **HOW I KNEW** _____

3 MAKE YOUR OWN

One of each

Write one new RIGHT example with a semicolon and one new WRONG example with a comma. Put two complete thoughts in each example.

RIGHT _____

WRONG _____

CHALLENGE

Revise your WRONG example in two ways: once with a semicolon and once as two separate sentences.

ANSWER KEY

Punctuation Detective

GRADE 6 · 6.LL.19.b

PART 1 · SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	Rain tapped the roof; our game moved inside.	**RIGHT**	A semicolon joins two related complete sentences.
2	Jaden checked the map; our trail curved left.	**RIGHT**	Both sides are complete sentences joined by a semicolon.
3	Ava finished her sketch, her pencil snapped.	**WRONG**	A comma alone joins two complete sentences.
4	The final bell rang, students rushed outside.	**WRONG**	A comma alone joins two complete sentences.
5	The hallway fell quiet; rehearsal began.	**RIGHT**	Both sides are complete sentences joined by a semicolon.
6	My kite rose high, its string slipped loose.	**WRONG**	A comma alone joins two complete sentences.
7	Our team practiced hard; we felt ready.	**RIGHT**	A semicolon joins two related complete sentences.
8	The soup smelled spicy; Dad offered a taste.	**RIGHT**	Both sides are complete sentences joined by a semicolon.

PART 2 · PROVE IT

Task: Choose one item from each category and explain how you knew.
Accept any explanation that names the deciding feature from the rule box for the chosen item.

PART 3 · MAKE YOUR OWN (SAMPLE ANSWERS)

- **RIGHT**: Tariq tuned his guitar; the band began to play.
- **WRONG**: Nina opened her notebook, her pen ran out of ink.

Challenge: Nina opened her notebook; her pen ran out of ink. Nina opened her notebook. Her pen ran out of ink.

RIGHT: 1, 2, 5, 7, 8. WRONG: 3, 4, 6. For Part 2, look for an explanation that both sides are complete sentences and that a comma alone cannot join them.