Tense Detectives

Find verbs that stay in time or slip.

4.W.6.b.II "Recognizing and correcting inappropriate shifts in verb tense."

NAME _____ DATE _____

TENSE STAYS

Both verbs tell about the same time. The sentence does not make an unexpected jump from past to present or present to past.

A turtle crawled beneath a fence and rested in the shade.

TENSE SLIPS

One verb tells about the past, but the other tells about the present. There is no reason for the time to change.

The chef chopped carrots and stirs the soup.

1 SORT

8 items

Circle STEADY or SHIFT for each numbered sentence; in Part 2, choose two items and explain how the verb tenses helped you sort each one.

1. Nina washed her bike and wiped the seat. STEADY SHIFT

2. The puppy sniffed the box and scratched the lid. STEADY SHIFT

3. Leo opened his notebook and writes a poem. STEADY SHIFT

4. The rain pelted the roof and soaked the yard. STEADY SHIFT

5. I fold the blanket and placed it on my bed. STEADY SHIFT

6. Maya picks a pear and ate it at lunch. STEADY SHIFT

7. The students carry their bags and enter the gym. STEADY SHIFT

8. Dad fixed the shelf and tightened its screws. STEADY SHIFT

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 STEADY sentence and one new SHIFT sentence; use two action verbs in each.

STEADY _____

SHIFT _____

CHALLENGE

Choose one SHIFT sentence from Part 1 and rewrite it so both verbs use the same tense; write its number.

ANSWER KEY

Tense Detectives

GRADE 4 · 4.W.6.b.II

PART 1 · SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	Nina washed her bike and wiped the seat.	**STEADY**	Washed and wiped are both past tense.
2	The puppy sniffed the box and scratched the lid.	**STEADY**	Sniffed and scratched are both past tense.
3	Leo opened his notebook and writes a poem.	**SHIFT**	Opened is past tense, but writes is present tense.
4	The rain pelted the roof and soaked the yard.	**STEADY**	Pelted and soaked are both past tense.
5	I fold the blanket and placed it on my bed.	**SHIFT**	Fold is present tense, but placed is past tense.
6	Maya picks a pear and ate it at lunch.	**SHIFT**	Picks is present tense, but ate is past tense.
7	The students carry their bags and enter the gym.	**STEADY**	Carry and enter are both present tense.
8	Dad fixed the shelf and tightened its screws.	**STEADY**	Fixed and tightened are both past tense.

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)

- **STEADY**: A bird chirped near the pond and flew away.
- **SHIFT**: Sam ties his shoes and ran to the bus.

Challenge: 3. Leo opened his notebook and wrote a poem.

For Part 2, students should identify the tense of both verbs in each chosen item and explain whether the tenses match. In the challenge, accept a correction that makes both verbs past tense or both verbs present tense.