Clause Crossroads

Find where the comma belongs.

7.W.7.a "Punctuation – Using commas with subordinate clauses."

NAME _____ DATE _____

COMMA NEEDED

When a subordinate clause comes before the main clause, put a comma between them. The subordinate clause cannot stand alone as a sentence.

Although the lantern flickered, the path stayed bright.

NO COMMA NEEDED

When a subordinate clause comes after the main clause, you usually do not put a comma between them.

The chef smiled when the soup was ready.

1 SORT

8 items

For Part 1, circle COMMA if the blank needs a comma or NONE if it does not; for Part 2, choose two items and explain how you knew.

1. The robotics club moved to the library [ ] because the gym was closed. COMMA NONE

2. If the river rises [ ] the footbridge will close. COMMA NONE

3. Before the concert began [ ] Mara checked her ticket. COMMA NONE

4. Jules took a different route [ ] since the sidewalk was icy. COMMA NONE

5. Unless the battery charges [ ] the camera will not turn on. COMMA NONE

6. After the timer rang [ ] Nia pulled the cookies from the oven. COMMA NONE

7. While the paint dried [ ] Omar cleaned the brushes. COMMA NONE

8. We stayed under the awning [ ] until the storm passed. COMMA NONE

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 sentence with a subordinate clause first and a comma, then one with a subordinate clause last and no comma.

COMMA _____

NONE _____

CHALLENGE

Write two sentences about the same event: put the subordinate clause first in one sentence and last in the other, and punctuate both correctly.

ANSWER KEY

Clause Crossroads

GRADE 7 · 7.W.7.a

PART 1 · SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	The robotics club moved to the library [ ] because the gym was closed.	**NONE**	The because clause follows the main clause, so no comma is needed.
2	If the river rises [ ] the footbridge will close.	**COMMA**	The if clause comes first, so a comma separates it from the main clause.
3	Before the concert began [ ] Mara checked her ticket.	**COMMA**	The before clause comes first, so a comma is needed.
4	Jules took a different route [ ] since the sidewalk was icy.	**NONE**	The since clause follows the main clause, so no comma is needed.
5	Unless the battery charges [ ] the camera will not turn on.	**COMMA**	The unless clause comes first, so a comma is needed.
6	After the timer rang [ ] Nia pulled the cookies from the oven.	**COMMA**	The after clause comes first, so a comma is needed.
7	While the paint dried [ ] Omar cleaned the brushes.	**COMMA**	The while clause comes first, so a comma is needed.
8	We stayed under the awning [ ] until the storm passed.	**NONE**	The until clause follows the main clause, so no comma is needed.

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)

- **COMMA**: If the screen freezes, I will restart the tablet.
- **NONE**: I will restart the tablet if the screen freezes.

Challenge: When the rain stops, the team will practice outside. The team will practice outside when the rain stops.

For Part 2, students should identify where the subordinate clause appears and explain whether that position calls for a comma. For example, item 2 begins with an if clause and needs a comma, while item 8 ends with an until clause and does not.