Comma Crossroads

One joining word, two comma choices.

10.5.W.7 "Students will write using correct comma mechanics."

NAME _____ DATE _____

COMMA NEEDED

Put a comma before a joining word such as and, but, or yet when it connects two complete thoughts. Each side has its own subject and verb.

The lantern flickered, yet the cave remained dark.

NO COMMA NEEDED

Do not put a comma before a joining word when it connects two actions by the same subject. The words after it cannot stand alone as a sentence.

Our guide paused or turned back.

1 SORT

8 items

For each sentence, circle COMMA if a comma belongs before the bold word or NONE if it does not, then choose one item from each category and explain your choices.

1. The debate ended **but** the judges kept talking. COMMA NONE
2. The storm passed **and** the streets began to dry. COMMA NONE
3. Ravi sharpened his pencil **and** opened his notebook. COMMA NONE
4. The team rehearsed **but** the director changed the plan. COMMA NONE
5. The baker measured the flour **and** mixed the dough. COMMA NONE
6. Tessa scanned the article **but** skipped the comments. COMMA NONE
7. The bus arrived **but** the passengers stayed on the curb. COMMA NONE
8. The screen froze **and** the technician restarted the program. COMMA NONE

2 PROVE IT

Explain your thinking

Choose one item from each category and explain your choices.

ITEM # _____ **HOW I KNEW** _____

ITEM # _____ **HOW I KNEW** _____

3 MAKE YOUR OWN

One of each

Write one new sentence that needs a comma before a joining word and one that does not need a comma before a joining word.

COMMA _____

NONE _____

CHALLENGE

Write one sentence with two actions by the same subject and two complete thoughts joined by but. Put the comma where it belongs.

ANSWER KEY # Comma Crossroads

GRADE 10 · 10.5.W.7

PART 1 · SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	The debate ended **but** the judges kept talking.	**COMMA**	The debate ended and the judges kept talking are both complete clauses.
2	The storm passed **and** the streets began to dry.	**COMMA**	Each side of and has its own subject and verb.
3	Ravi sharpened his pencil **and** opened his notebook.	**NONE**	Ravi is the subject of both actions.
4	The team rehearsed **but** the director changed the plan.	**COMMA**	The team rehearsed and the director changed the plan are both complete clauses.
5	The baker measured the flour **and** mixed the dough.	**NONE**	The baker is the subject of both actions.
6	Tessa scanned the article **but** skipped the comments.	**NONE**	Tessa is the subject of both actions.
7	The bus arrived **but** the passengers stayed on the curb.	**COMMA**	Each side of but has its own subject and verb.
8	The screen froze **and** the technician restarted the program.	**COMMA**	Each side of and is a complete clause.

PART 2 · PROVE IT

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

PART 3 · MAKE YOUR OWN (SAMPLE ANSWERS)

- **COMMA**: The plumber inspected the sink, and the homeowner signed the form.
- **NONE**: The dancer stretched and tied her shoes.

Challenge: Nina reviewed the footage and edited the captions, but Leo designed the poster.

COMMA: 1, 2, 4, 7, 8. NONE: 3, 5, 6. For the explanations, check whether the words after the joining word have their own subject and form a complete thought.