Comma Decision Desk

Decide when two joined ideas need a comma.

11.5.W.6 "Students will write using correct comma mechanics."

NAME _____ DATE _____

COMMA NEEDED

Use a comma before and or but when it joins two independent clauses. Each clause has its own subject and verb.

Talia folded the map, and Omar checked the compass.

NO COMMA NEEDED

Do not use a comma before and or but when it joins two verbs that share one subject.

Talia folded the map and checked the compass.

1 SORT

8 items

For Part 1, circle COMMA or NONE for the spot before and or but in each sentence; for Part 2, choose two items and explain how you decided.

1.	The photographer reviewed the images and the designer selected a cover.	COMMA	NONE
2.	The reporter read the transcript and marked three unclear passages.	COMMA	NONE
3.	The editor opened the draft but questioned its final claim.	COMMA	NONE
4.	The deadline moved closer but the team stayed calm.	COMMA	NONE
5.	One source refused to comment and another offered a document.	COMMA	NONE
6.	The fact-checker found the original report and confirmed the date.	COMMA	NONE
7.	The captions looked accurate but the layout hid a key detail.	COMMA	NONE
8.	The article explained the decision and the readers debated its impact.	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 that needs a comma before and or but, and one that does not. Put the comma in the sentence that needs it.

COMMA _____

NONE _____

CHALLENGE

Write one sentence with both and and but. Make one join two verbs with a shared subject and the other join two independent clauses. Place a comma before only the conjunction that needs it.

ANSWER KEY

Comma Decision Desk

GRADE 11 · 11.5.W.6

PART 1 · SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	The photographer reviewed the images and the designer selected a cover.	**COMMA**	The photographer and the designer are subjects of separate independent clauses.
2	The reporter read the transcript and marked three unclear passages.	**NONE**	The reporter is the shared subject of read and marked.
3	The editor opened the draft but questioned its final claim.	**NONE**	The editor is the shared subject of opened and questioned.
4	The deadline moved closer but the team stayed calm.	**COMMA**	The deadline and the team are subjects of separate independent clauses.
5	One source refused to comment and another offered a document.	**COMMA**	One source and another are subjects of separate independent clauses.
6	The fact-checker found the original report and confirmed the date.	**NONE**	The fact-checker is the shared subject of found and confirmed.
7	The captions looked accurate but the layout hid a key detail.	**COMMA**	The captions and the layout are subjects of separate independent clauses.
8	The article explained the decision and the readers debated its impact.	**COMMA**	The article and the readers are subjects of separate independent clauses.

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**: The curator inspected the painting, and the visitors studied the labels.
- **NONE**: The curator inspected the painting and checked its frame.

Challenge: Priya scanned the chart and noted a pattern, but Malik requested more data.

Insert a comma immediately before the conjunction in items 1, 4, 5, 7, and 8. For Part 2, accept explanations that identify either two independent clauses or two verbs with a shared subject.