Semicolon Check

Sort sentences before they go to print.

12.2.W.4 "Students will routinely and recursively use resources to edit for grammar, usage, mechanics, and format in order to finalize drafts for publication."

NAME _____ DATE _____

READY TO PUBLISH

A semicolon can join two closely related clauses when each could stand alone as a sentence.

Owls hooted; stars shimmered.

NEEDS AN EDIT

If either side of a semicolon cannot stand alone as a sentence, revise the punctuation or wording.

Although dawn approached; hikers slept.

1 SORT

8 items

Use a grammar reference to check each side of the semicolon, circle READY or EDIT for each item, then choose one item from each category and explain how you knew.

1. The archive reopened; visitors requested rare maps. READY EDIT
2. The data were incomplete; the committee delayed its vote. READY EDIT
3. Because the engine overheated; the driver pulled over. READY EDIT
4. The witness paused; the attorney reviewed her notes. READY EDIT
5. The sculpture arrived intact; its display case was damaged. READY EDIT
6. The article cites three studies; without naming their authors. READY EDIT
7. The survey ended early; several responses remained uncounted. READY EDIT
8. After the storm cleared; the ferry resumed service. READY EDIT

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 READY example and one new EDIT example, using a semicolon in each.

READY _____

EDIT _____

CHALLENGE

Revise one EDIT item so both sides of its semicolon can stand alone as sentences, then reread both sides to check your revision.

ANSWER KEY # Semicolon Check

GRADE 12 · 12.2.W.4

PART 1 · SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	The archive reopened; visitors requested rare maps.	**READY**	Both sides can stand alone as sentences.
2	The data were incomplete; the committee delayed its vote.	**READY**	Both sides can stand alone as sentences.
3	Because the engine overheated; the driver pulled over.	**EDIT**	The clause beginning with 'Because' cannot stand alone.
4	The witness paused; the attorney reviewed her notes.	**READY**	Both sides can stand alone as sentences.
5	The sculpture arrived intact; its display case was damaged.	**READY**	Both sides can stand alone as sentences.
6	The article cites three studies; without naming their authors.	**EDIT**	The phrase after the semicolon cannot stand alone.
7	The survey ended early; several responses remained uncounted.	**READY**	Both sides can stand alone as sentences.
8	After the storm cleared; the ferry resumed service.	**EDIT**	The clause beginning with 'After' cannot stand alone.

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)

- **READY**: Moths gathered near the porch light; rain struck the roof.
- **EDIT**: If the printer jams; our deadline may shift.

Challenge: The article cites three studies; their authors remain unnamed.

For Part 2, a student might explain that both sides of item 2 are complete sentences, while the words after the semicolon in item 6 cannot stand alone. For the challenge sample, the revised words after the semicolon form a complete sentence.