Semicolon Detectives

Check both sides of the mark.

5.5.W.11 "Students will use a semicolon to punctuate compound sentences."

NAME _____ DATE _____

SEMICOLON WORKS

A semicolon can join two related complete thoughts. Each side must be able to stand alone as a sentence.

The lantern flickered; the cave grew dark.

SEMICOLON NEEDS A FIX

A semicolon does not work if the words on either side cannot stand alone as a sentence.

The kitten slept; on the warm blanket.

1 SORT

8 items

Circle RIGHT or FIX for each item, then choose one item from each group and explain how you knew.

1.	The rain stopped; the sidewalk began to dry.	RIGHT	FIX
2.	Nina opened the box; a tiny robot rolled out.	RIGHT	FIX
3.	Our class cheered; after the final goal.	RIGHT	FIX
4.	The puzzle looked hard; Omar solved it quickly.	RIGHT	FIX
5.	The tall sunflower; leaned toward the fence.	RIGHT	FIX
6.	While the soup cooled; Dad sliced the bread.	RIGHT	FIX
7.	Maya found a shell; Luis spotted a crab.	RIGHT	FIX
8.	The lights went out; everyone grabbed a flashlight.	RIGHT	FIX

2 PROVE IT

Explain your thinking

Choose one item from each group and explain how you knew.

ITEM # _____ **HOW I KNEW** _____

ITEM # _____ **HOW I KNEW** _____

3 MAKE YOUR OWN

One of each

Write one new sentence with a semicolon used correctly and one with a semicolon used incorrectly; label them RIGHT and FIX.

RIGHT _____

FIX _____

CHALLENGE

Choose one FIX item and rewrite it so the semicolon joins two complete sentences; include the item number.

ANSWER KEY # Semicolon Detectives

GRADE 5 · 5.5.W.11

PART 1 · SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	The rain stopped; the sidewalk began to dry.	**RIGHT**	Both sides are complete sentences.
2	Nina opened the box; a tiny robot rolled out.	**RIGHT**	Both sides are complete sentences.
3	Our class cheered; after the final goal.	**FIX**	The words after the semicolon are not a complete sentence.
4	The puzzle looked hard; Omar solved it quickly.	**RIGHT**	Both sides are complete sentences.
5	The tall sunflower; leaned toward the fence.	**FIX**	The semicolon separates the subject from its verb.
6	While the soup cooled; Dad sliced the bread.	**FIX**	The words before the semicolon cannot stand alone as a sentence.
7	Maya found a shell; Luis spotted a crab.	**RIGHT**	Both sides are complete sentences.
8	The lights went out; everyone grabbed a flashlight.	**RIGHT**	Both sides are complete sentences.

PART 2 · PROVE IT

Task: Choose one item from each group 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)

- **RIGHT**: The river rose; the path flooded.
- **FIX**: My brother waited; near the gate.

Challenge: 3. Our class cheered; our team scored the final goal.

For Part 2, a student might explain that item 1 has a complete sentence on each side, while item 3 ends with words that cannot stand alone. Accept other explanations that correctly test both sides of the semicolon.