Clause Order Clues

Sort sentences by where the dependent clause goes.

5.5.W.7 "Students will use commas to separate individual words in a series, to indicate dialogue, and to separate the independent and dependent clauses in a complex sentence."

NAME _____ DATE _____

COMMA NEEDED

When a dependent clause comes before a complete thought, put a comma between them.

Although lanterns flickered, hikers followed trails.

NO COMMA

When the complete thought comes first and the dependent clause follows it, do not put a comma between them.

Puppies slept until thunder stopped.

1 SORT

8 items

For Part 1, circle COMMA or NONE for each sentence; for Part 2, choose one item from each group and explain how you knew.

1.	When the bell rang we lined up.	COMMA	NONE
2.	Because the pond froze the ducks moved south.	COMMA	NONE
3.	The class cheered after Maya scored a goal.	COMMA	NONE
4.	If the soil feels dry the gardener waters the seeds.	COMMA	NONE
5.	Leo carried an umbrella because rain was likely.	COMMA	NONE
6.	Our dog barked when the gate opened.	COMMA	NONE
7.	Before the movie started Amira found her seat.	COMMA	NONE
8.	The lights dimmed as the play began.	COMMA	NONE

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 for COMMA and one for NONE. Add any comma that belongs.

COMMA _____

NONE _____

CHALLENGE

Rewrite item 1 so its complete thought comes first. Punctuate your new sentence correctly.

ANSWER KEY

Clause Order Clues

GRADE 5 · 5.5.W.7

PART 1 · SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	When the bell rang we lined up.	**COMMA**	The dependent clause comes first, so a comma belongs after “rang.”
2	Because the pond froze the ducks moved south.	**COMMA**	The dependent clause comes first, so a comma belongs after “froze.”
3	The class cheered after Maya scored a goal.	**NONE**	The complete thought comes before the dependent clause.
4	If the soil feels dry the gardener waters the seeds.	**COMMA**	The dependent clause comes first, so a comma belongs after “dry.”
5	Leo carried an umbrella because rain was likely.	**NONE**	The complete thought comes before the dependent clause.
6	Our dog barked when the gate opened.	**NONE**	The complete thought comes before the dependent clause.
7	Before the movie started Amira found her seat.	**COMMA**	The dependent clause comes first, so a comma belongs after “started.”
8	The lights dimmed as the play began.	**NONE**	The complete thought comes before the dependent clause.

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)

- **COMMA**: After the snow melted, robins returned.
- **NONE**: The chef washed dishes before the guests arrived.

Challenge: We lined up when the bell rang.

Items 1, 2, 4, and 7 need a comma after the opening dependent clause. Items 3, 5, 6, and 8 do not need a comma between the clauses.