Semicolon Sort

Decide which semicolons work and which need a fix.

7.5.W.11 "Students will use a semicolon to punctuate compound and compound-complex sentences."

NAME _____ DATE _____

CORRECT

A semicolon can join two parts that could each stand alone as a sentence. Do not put a joining word like and or but right after it.

The violin fell silent; the audience leaned forward.

NEEDS A FIX

A semicolon needs a fix if one side cannot stand alone as a sentence or if a joining word like and or but comes right after it.

The pebble skipped; because the lake was calm.

1 SORT

8 items

Read each numbered item and circle CORRECT or REVISE.

1.	The bus arrived late; Maya missed the first song.	CORRECT	REVISE
2.	The lights went out; but the play continued.	CORRECT	REVISE
3.	I checked the forecast; dark clouds covered the sky.	CORRECT	REVISE
4.	Although the path was muddy, Eli kept walking; his sister followed close behind.	CORRECT	REVISE
5.	The recipe called for honey; we used maple syrup instead.	CORRECT	REVISE
6.	The bell rang; after the last runner crossed the line.	CORRECT	REVISE
7.	Nina found the missing key; and she opened the shed.	CORRECT	REVISE
8.	The team cleaned the beach; volunteers sorted the trash after the tide went out.	CORRECT	REVISE

2 PROVE IT

Explain your thinking

Pick two sort items, one 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 CORRECT example and one new REVISE example.

CORRECT _____

REVISE _____

CHALLENGE

Write a correct compound-complex sentence with a semicolon, then name its two complete thoughts and its dependent clause.

ANSWER KEY

Semicolon Sort

GRADE 7 · 7.5.W.11

PART 1 · SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	The bus arrived late; Maya missed the first song.	**CORRECT**	Both sides can stand alone as sentences.
2	The lights went out; but the play continued.	**REVISE**	But should not follow the semicolon when joining these clauses.
3	I checked the forecast; dark clouds covered the sky.	**CORRECT**	Both sides can stand alone as sentences.
4	Although the path was muddy, Eli kept walking; his sister followed close behind.	**CORRECT**	Both sides can stand alone as sentences, even though the first side includes a dependent clause.
5	The recipe called for honey; we used maple syrup instead.	**CORRECT**	Both sides can stand alone as sentences.
6	The bell rang; after the last runner crossed the line.	**REVISE**	The words after the semicolon form a dependent clause, not a complete sentence.
7	Nina found the missing key; and she opened the shed.	**REVISE**	And should not follow the semicolon when joining these clauses.
8	The team cleaned the beach; volunteers sorted the trash after the tide went out.	**CORRECT**	Both sides can stand alone as sentences, even though the second side includes a dependent clause.

PART 2 · PROVE IT

Task: Pick two sort items, one 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)

- **CORRECT**: The dog scratched the door; someone let him outside.
- **REVISE**: My boots were soaked; because I stepped in a puddle.

Challenge: When the rain stopped, we opened the windows; fresh air filled the room. Complete thoughts: We opened the windows. Fresh air filled the room. Dependent clause: When the rain stopped.

For PROVE IT, accept explanations that identify two complete thoughts or point out a dependent clause or joining word that makes the semicolon incorrect. For example, item 4 has a complete thought on each side, while item 7 puts and right after the semicolon.