Comma Check

Sort sentences by whether they are ready to publish.

9.2.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

An opening dependent clause cannot stand alone. A comma after that clause separates it from the main clause.

Although the violin squeaked, the musician kept playing.

NEEDS EDITING

A sentence needs editing if it is missing the comma after an opening dependent clause.

Whenever the kettle whistles the chef pours tea.

1 SORT

8 items

Circle READY or EDIT for each sentence; then choose one item from each category and explain where its opening clause ends and whether the comma is present, using a punctuation guide to check your reasoning.

1. When the storm passed, the hikers continued uphill. READY EDIT
2. Because the gate was locked, Maya took another path. READY EDIT
3. After the bell rang the students opened their notebooks. READY EDIT
4. If the train arrives early, we can visit the museum. READY EDIT
5. While the dog slept Jonah painted the porch. READY EDIT
6. Since the road was icy the driver slowed down. READY EDIT
7. Before the concert began, the audience silenced their phones. READY EDIT
8. Although the recipe looked simple Nia read each step twice. READY EDIT

2 PROVE IT

Explain your thinking

Choose one item from each category and explain where its opening clause ends and whether the comma is present, using a punctuation guide to check your reasoning.

ITEM # _____ **HOW I KNEW** _____

ITEM # _____ **HOW I KNEW** _____

3 MAKE YOUR OWN

One of each

Write two new sentences with opening dependent clauses: one READY sentence with the needed comma and one EDIT sentence missing that comma; label each.

READY _____

EDIT _____

CHALLENGE

Choose one EDIT sentence from Part 1, add the missing comma, and explain in one sentence why your revision is ready to publish.

ANSWER KEY # Comma Check

GRADE 9 · 9.2.W.4

PART 1 · SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	When the storm passed, the hikers continued uphill.	**READY**	A comma follows the opening dependent clause.
2	Because the gate was locked, Maya took another path.	**READY**	A comma follows the opening dependent clause.
3	After the bell rang the students opened their notebooks.	**EDIT**	A comma is missing after 'After the bell rang.'
4	If the train arrives early, we can visit the museum.	**READY**	A comma follows the opening dependent clause.
5	While the dog slept Jonah painted the porch.	**EDIT**	A comma is missing after 'While the dog slept.'
6	Since the road was icy the driver slowed down.	**EDIT**	A comma is missing after 'Since the road was icy.'
7	Before the concert began, the audience silenced their phones.	**READY**	A comma follows the opening dependent clause.
8	Although the recipe looked simple Nia read each step twice.	**EDIT**	A comma is missing after 'Although the recipe looked simple.'

PART 2 · PROVE IT

Task: Choose one item from each category and explain where its opening clause ends and whether the comma is present, using a punctuation guide to check your reasoning.
Accept any explanation that names the deciding feature from the rule box for the chosen item.

PART 3 · MAKE YOUR OWN (SAMPLE ANSWERS)

- **READY**: Unless the tide turns, the boat will stay near shore.
- **EDIT**: When the paint dried Omar hung the frame.

Challenge: After the bell rang, the students opened their notebooks. The comma separates the opening dependent clause from the main clause.

For Part 2, accept explanations that identify the end of the opening clause and correctly state whether a comma follows it. The EDIT samples intentionally omit a required comma.