Comma Migration Map

Mark how commas guide a reader through a model text.

6.10.D.viii "punctuation marks, including commas in complex sentences, transitions, and introductory elements; and"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle each transition or introductory word or phrase, and underline the comma that follows it. Box each introductory dependent clause to show why the comma is needed.

Following the Monarchs

1. Each fall, millions of monarch butterflies leave Canada and the United States for mountain forests in central Mexico. Before the trip begins, the butterflies feed on nectar and store energy. Because they cannot survive a cold northern winter, they travel south for several weeks. The journey is remarkable. No single butterfly completes the whole yearly cycle. In spring, the survivors begin moving north. As they travel, they lay eggs on milkweed plants. A new generation continues the trip.

2. Monarchs use sunlight and Earth's magnetic field to help guide their flight. However, clouds can hide the sun for long periods. During these times, the butterflies may rely more on their internal compass. When wind speeds rise, monarchs often rest in sheltered trees. They save energy there until conditions improve. In addition, cool nights slow their movement because their muscles need warmth. Although the trip is dangerous, many monarchs reach Mexico by late October. There, they cluster on oyamel fir trees. The branches protect them from rain and cold.

3. Scientists track monarchs to learn where the insects travel and what threatens them. First, researchers place tiny tags on some butterflies before migration begins. If a tagged monarch is found, the person who sees it reports the code. This information shows how far that butterfly traveled. Next, scientists compare reports from different places. As a result, they can map parts of the migration route. Because milkweed is the only plant monarch caterpillars eat, people also count milkweed patches. These counts help experts decide where new habitat could support monarchs.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What introductory dependent clause tells why monarchs travel south in paragraph 1? What does the comma separate it from?

2. What transition begins the sentence about cool nights in paragraph 2? Why is there a comma after it?

3. Which two introductory transitions in paragraph 3 show the order of the scientists' actions?

4. In paragraph 3, find the sentence that begins with an if clause. Write the dependent clause and the main clause.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write three connected sentences about an animal journey. Start the first sentence with an introductory word or phrase and a comma, begin the second sentence with a dependent clause and a comma, and start the third sentence with a transition and a comma. Then check the introductory commas in your draft. Keep correct punctuation or correct it as needed; explain one decision in a separate checking note.

ANSWER KEY

Comma Migration Map

GRADE 6 · TEKS 6.10.D.viii

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Circle each transition or introductory word or phrase, and underline the comma that follows it. Box each introductory dependent clause to show why the comma is needed. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What introductory dependent clause tells why monarchs travel south in paragraph 1? What does the comma separate it from?	**Because they cannot survive a cold northern winter. The comma separates the clause from the main clause, "they travel south for several weeks."**
2	What transition begins the sentence about cool nights in paragraph 2? Why is there a comma after it?	**"In addition," It signals added information, and the comma separates the transition from the main statement.**
3	Which two introductory transitions in paragraph 3 show the order of the scientists' actions?	**"First," and "Next,"**
4	In paragraph 3, find the sentence that begins with an if clause. Write the dependent clause and the main clause.	**Dependent clause: "If a tagged monarch is found," Main clause: "the person who sees it reports the code."**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Before sunrise, sea turtles hatch beneath the sand. Because the beach is cooler at night, the hatchlings move toward the ocean. Finally, they swim away from the shore.

Draft check: Keep the comma after Because the beach is cooler at night because it separates the introductory dependent clause from the main clause. Keep the commas after Before sunrise and Finally because they mark the introductory phrase and transition.

Accept accurate markings of introductory words, phrases, transitions, and dependent clauses, with the commas immediately following them. For Part 3, require three connected sentences with the requested comma uses and a logical final detail. Assess the actual draft check separately from the original sentence-count requirement. Accept supported retention of correct usage as well as needed corrections; require a convention-based reason, not a manufactured error or full rewrite.