Rules and Rebels

Sort mechanics by purpose, then defend your choices.

11-12.L.2 "Demonstrate command of standard English mechanics and conventions. Consult references as needed. Apply the understanding that mechanics are a matter of convention, can change over time and within different contexts..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

STANDARD MECHANICS

The writing follows capitalization and punctuation conventions commonly used in edited English.

Mercury glows at dawn.

STYLISTIC MECHANICS

The writer deliberately departs from a convention to create an effect. A deliberate departure is not automatically an error.

A poet prints "SILENCE" in capitals to make quiet seem forceful.

1 SORT

8 items

Circle STANDARD or STYLISTIC for each item, then choose two items, one from each category, and explain the clue that helped you decide.

1.	After the hearing, the council voted.	STANDARD	STYLISTIC
2.	In a poem about speed, the writer omits punctuation: "run run run run"	STANDARD	STYLISTIC
3.	A poster spells "loooong" to stretch the sound.	STANDARD	STYLISTIC
4.	The archive closed early; its staff returned Monday.	STANDARD	STYLISTIC
5.	"Where is my notebook?" asked Lena.	STANDARD	STYLISTIC
6.	The hikers' tents stood beside the trail.	STANDARD	STYLISTIC
7.	A zine prints its title "small voices" in lowercase to reject a grand tone.	STANDARD	STYLISTIC
8.	The verdict was clear: both claims lacked evidence.	STANDARD	STYLISTIC

2 PROVE IT

Explain your thinking

Pick two items from Part 1. For each one, tell how you knew where it belonged.

ITEM # _____ **HOW I KNEW** _____

ITEM # _____ **HOW I KNEW** _____

3 MAKE YOUR OWN

One of each

Write one new sentence with STANDARD mechanics and one new sentence that deliberately uses STYLISTIC mechanics. Name the effect of your stylistic choice.

STANDARD

STYLISTIC

CHALLENGE

Rewrite your STANDARD sentence as a STYLISTIC version by changing its punctuation, capitalization, or spelling, then explain how your change affects the reader.

Rules and Rebels

PART 1 · SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	After the hearing, the council voted.	**STANDARD**	A comma follows the introductory phrase.
2	In a poem about speed, the writer omits punctuation: "run run run run"	**STYLISTIC**	The stated omission creates a rushing effect.
3	A poster spells "loooong" to stretch the sound.	**STYLISTIC**	The altered spelling deliberately extends the word's sound.
4	The archive closed early; its staff returned Monday.	**STANDARD**	A semicolon joins two closely related independent clauses.
5	"Where is my notebook?" asked Lena.	**STANDARD**	The question mark belongs inside the quotation marks.
6	The hikers' tents stood beside the trail.	**STANDARD**	The apostrophe marks a plural possessive.
7	A zine prints its title "small voices" in lowercase to reject a grand tone.	**STYLISTIC**	The stated lowercase choice serves a tonal purpose.
8	The verdict was clear: both claims lacked evidence.	**STANDARD**	A colon follows a complete clause and introduces its explanation.

PART 2 · PROVE IT

Accept any explanation that names the deciding feature from the rule box for the chosen item.

PART 3 · MAKE YOUR OWN (SAMPLE ANSWERS)

- **STANDARD**: The librarian sorted the returned books.
- **STYLISTIC**: The storm was LOUD tonight. The capitals make the noise feel overwhelming.

Challenge: the librarian sorted the returned books... The lowercase opening and trailing ellipsis make the task feel unfinished.

For Part 2, accept explanations that identify both a specific mechanical feature and its role in context. For Part 3, a stylistic example must show a purposeful departure, not merely an unexplained error.