Comma Detectives

Sort sentences with a series of actions or ideas.

5.L.2.a "Use commas to separate phrases and clauses in a series."

NAME _____ DATE _____

READY

Use commas to separate three or more action phrases or clauses in a series. On this page, each series also has a comma before and.

Zoe stacked the books, sharpened her pencils, and zipped her backpack.

NEEDS A FIX

At least one comma is missing between parts of the series. The sentence needs a comma to separate those parts.

Ravi mixed the dough rolled it flat, and baked the crust.

1 SORT

8 items

Circle READY or FIX for each sentence, then for PROVE IT choose two numbered items and explain which commas are present or missing.

1.	Maya folded the paper, taped the edges, and drew a star.	READY FIX
2.	The class discussed where the trail began how the bridge was built, and why the river curved.	READY FIX
3.	Dad checked the tires filled the tank, and cleaned the windows.	READY FIX
4.	I know what the sign means, where the bus stops, and when it arrives.	READY FIX
5.	Nina carried the bucket, filled the bowl, and fed the puppy.	READY FIX
6.	We asked how seeds grow, why leaves fall, and when birds migrate.	READY FIX
7.	The guide explained how fossils form where they are found, and why they matter.	READY FIX
8.	Omar swept the porch, watered the pots, and locked the shed.	READY FIX

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

MAKE YOUR OWN: Write one new READY sentence and one new FIX sentence, each with a series of three action phrases or clauses.

READY _____

FIX _____

CHALLENGE

Write a READY sentence that begins with "I wonder" and lists four question clauses, then underline the commas that separate them.

ANSWER KEY # Comma Detectives

GRADE 5 · 5.L.2.a

PART 1 · SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	Maya folded the paper, taped the edges, and drew a star.	**READY**	Commas separate all three action phrases.
2	The class discussed where the trail began how the bridge was built, and why the river curved.	**FIX**	A comma is missing after began, between the first two clauses in the series.
3	Dad checked the tires filled the tank, and cleaned the windows.	**FIX**	A comma is missing after tires, between the first two action phrases.
4	I know what the sign means, where the bus stops, and when it arrives.	**READY**	Commas separate all three clauses in the series.
5	Nina carried the bucket, filled the bowl, and fed the puppy.	**READY**	Commas separate all three action phrases.
6	We asked how seeds grow, why leaves fall, and when birds migrate.	**READY**	Commas separate all three clauses in the series.
7	The guide explained how fossils form where they are found, and why they matter.	**FIX**	A comma is missing after form, between the first two clauses in the series.
8	Omar swept the porch, watered the pots, and locked the shed.	**READY**	Commas separate all three action phrases.

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)

- **READY**: Leah planted a bulb, pulled a weed, and rinsed her gloves.
- **FIX**: Jalen tied his skates grabbed his helmet, and stepped onto the ice.

Challenge: I wonder what ants carry, where bees fly, how spiders spin webs, and why dogs bark.

Items 1, 4, 5, 6, and 8 are READY; items 2, 3, and 7 are FIX. For PROVE IT, accept explanations that identify the comma separating the first two parts of a series or show where that comma is missing.