

Third Letter Detectives

Use the third letter to check ABC order.

3.2.C “alphabetize a series of words to the third letter; and”

NAME _____

DATE _____

IN ABC ORDER

The words are in ABC order. If the first two letters match, look at the third letters.

cub, cup, cut

NOT IN ABC ORDER

The words are not in ABC order. Check the first place where the letters are different, including the third letter.

fan, fat, far

1 SORT _____ 8 items

For each word list, circle ORDERED or MIXED, then pick two lists and explain which letters helped you decide.

1. cap, can, cat

ORDERED

MIXED

2. pig, pin, pit

ORDERED

MIXED

3. bed, bee, bell

ORDERED

MIXED

4. run, rub, rug

ORDERED

MIXED

5. map, man, mat

ORDERED

MIXED

6. fog, font, fox

ORDERED

MIXED

7. hot, hop, how

ORDERED

MIXED

8. lip, lid, lie

ORDERED

MIXED

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 ORDERED word list and one new MIXED word list. Use three words in each list that have the same first two letters.

ORDERED _____

MIXED _____

CHALLENGE

Write four words that begin with sp. Put them in ABC order by the third letter.

PART 1 • SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	cap, can, cat	MIXED	The third letters are p, n, t, so can should come before cap.
2	pig, pin, pit	ORDERED	The third letters are g, n, t in ABC order.
3	bed, bee, bell	ORDERED	The third letters are d, e, l in ABC order.
4	run, rub, rug	MIXED	The third letters are n, b, g, so rub should come first.
5	map, man, mat	MIXED	The third letters are p, n, t, so man should come before map.
6	fog, font, fox	ORDERED	The third letters are g, n, x in ABC order.
7	hot, hop, how	MIXED	The third letters are t, p, w, so hop should come before hot.
8	lip, lid, lie	MIXED	The third letters are p, d, e, so lid should come first.

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)

- **ORDERED:** bag, bat, bay
- **MIXED:** jet, jam, jar

Challenge: speak, spice, spoon, spun

Accept any explanation that names the deciding feature from the rule box for the chosen item. For PROVE IT, students should name the third letters and tell whether they are in ABC order. Accept different correct word lists in Part 3 and the challenge.