

Expense Detectives

Sort expenses, explain why two choices fit, and create examples.

4.10.A "distinguish between fixed and variable expenses;"

NAME _____

DATE _____

FIXED EXPENSES

A fixed expense usually costs the same amount each time you pay it. It is often a regular payment.

The same \$15 charge for a magazine subscription every month.

VARIABLE EXPENSES

A variable expense can cost a different amount each time you pay it. The cost may change based on what you buy or use.

The cost of popcorn at a movie.

1 SORT _____ 8 items

For each expense, circle FIXED or VARIABLE.

1. Set monthly rent payment

FIXED

VARIABLE

2. Money spent on groceries

FIXED

VARIABLE

3. This month's electricity bill

FIXED

VARIABLE

4. Set monthly car loan payment

FIXED

VARIABLE

5. Set monthly gym membership fee

FIXED

VARIABLE

6. Money spent on a birthday gift

FIXED

VARIABLE

7. Set monthly internet plan payment

FIXED

VARIABLE

8. Set monthly pet insurance premium

FIXED

VARIABLE

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 fixed expense and one new variable expense.

FIXED

VARIABLE

CHALLENGE

A family pays \$900 for rent each month and spends a different amount on groceries each week. Write which cost is fixed and which is variable. Then explain why.

PART 1 • SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	Set monthly rent payment	FIXED	The payment amount is set and paid regularly.
2	Money spent on groceries	VARIABLE	The amount changes depending on what and how much is bought.
3	This month's electricity bill	VARIABLE	The cost changes based on how much electricity is used.
4	Set monthly car loan payment	FIXED	The loan payment is a set regular amount.
5	Set monthly gym membership fee	FIXED	The membership has a regular set fee.
6	Money spent on a birthday gift	VARIABLE	The cost can change based on the gift chosen.
7	Set monthly internet plan payment	FIXED	The plan has a set monthly payment.
8	Set monthly pet insurance premium	FIXED	The premium is a regular set payment.

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)

- **FIXED:** A set monthly dance class fee.
- **VARIABLE:** Money spent on a snack at a store.

Challenge: The \$900 monthly rent is fixed because it stays the same each month. Grocery spending is variable because the amount can change each week.

Accept any explanation that names the deciding feature from the rule box for the chosen item. For Part 2, accept any two correctly sorted items if the student explains that a fixed expense stays the same and a variable expense can change. The wording of the fixed items identifies them as set payments.