

Expense Detectives

Sort expenses by whether their cost stays the same.

4.10 "Personal financial literacy. The student applies mathematical process standards to manage one's financial resources effectively for lifetime financial security. The student is expected to: distinguish between fixed and variable expenses..."

NAME _____

DATE _____

FIXED EXPENSE

A fixed expense costs the same amount each time you pay it. It is often paid on a regular schedule.

A music class costs \$30 every week.

VARIABLE EXPENSE

A variable expense can cost a different amount each time. The amount may change because of how much you use or buy.

The cost of snacks at a sports game can change each time.

1 SORT

8 items

Circle FIXED or VARIABLE for each expense, then in Part 2 choose two items and explain how you knew.

1. Rent costs \$1,200 every month.

FIXED

VARIABLE

2. The amount spent on groceries changes each week.

FIXED

VARIABLE

3. The electric bill changes based on how much electricity is used.

FIXED

VARIABLE

4. A streaming subscription costs \$12 every month.

FIXED

VARIABLE

5. A car needs different amounts of gasoline each month.

FIXED

VARIABLE

6. A bus pass costs \$25 each month.

FIXED

VARIABLE

7. A phone plan costs \$40 every month.

FIXED

VARIABLE

8. A family spends different amounts on birthday gifts each year.

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

Part 3: Write one new FIXED expense and one new VARIABLE expense.

FIXED _____

VARIABLE _____

CHALLENGE

A club membership costs \$20 every month. A family's water bill is a different amount each month. Name each expense type and explain why.

PART 1 • SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	Rent costs \$1,200 every month.	FIXED	The rent amount is the same each month.
2	The amount spent on groceries changes each week.	VARIABLE	Grocery costs can change from week to week.
3	The electric bill changes based on how much electricity is used.	VARIABLE	Electricity use can make the bill change.
4	A streaming subscription costs \$12 every month.	FIXED	The subscription has the same monthly cost.
5	A car needs different amounts of gasoline each month.	VARIABLE	The amount spent on gasoline can change.
6	A bus pass costs \$25 each month.	FIXED	The bus pass costs the same amount each month.
7	A phone plan costs \$40 every month.	FIXED	The phone plan has the same monthly cost.
8	A family spends different amounts on birthday gifts each year.	VARIABLE	The amount spent on gifts can change each year.

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 gym membership costs \$18 every month.
- **VARIABLE:** The amount spent on school supplies can change.

Challenge: The club membership is **FIXED** because it costs \$20 every month. The water bill is **VARIABLE** because its amount changes each month.

For Part 2, accept explanations that state whether the amount stays the same or can change. For Part 3, accept reasonable expenses if each example clearly matches its category.