

Time Clue Detectives

Sort exact and event-based time clues.

5.23.C “analyze information by applying absolute and relative chronology through sequencing, categorizing, identifying cause-and-effect relationships, comparing, contrasting, finding the main idea, summarizing...”

NAME _____

DATE _____

ABSOLUTE TIME

An absolute time gives an exact date, year, or clock time. It does not depend on another event.

May 15, 2031.

RELATIVE TIME

A relative time tells when something happened compared with another event. Look for clues such as before, after, later, or during.

Once the bell rings.

1 SORT _____ 8 items

Part 1: Circle ABSOLUTE or RELATIVE for each time clue; Part 2: Choose two items and explain which time words show why each belongs there.

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. On October 12, 1492. | ☐ ABSOLUTE | ☐ RELATIVE |
| 2. Before the trial began. | ☐ ABSOLUTE | ☐ RELATIVE |
| 3. Three days after the vote. | ☐ ABSOLUTE | ☐ RELATIVE |
| 4. At 6:45 p.m. | ☐ ABSOLUTE | ☐ RELATIVE |
| 5. During the following winter. | ☐ ABSOLUTE | ☐ RELATIVE |
| 6. In 1865. | ☐ ABSOLUTE | ☐ RELATIVE |
| 7. Friday, March 1, 2024. | ☐ ABSOLUTE | ☐ RELATIVE |
| 8. At noon on July 4, 1776. | ☐ ABSOLUTE | ☐ RELATIVE |

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 ABSOLUTE time clue and one new RELATIVE time clue.

ABSOLUTE _____

RELATIVE _____

CHALLENGE

Write a three-event sequence. Give the first event an absolute time, then use relative time clues for the next two events.

PART 1 • SORT

#	ITEM	CATEGORY	WHY
1	On October 12, 1492.	ABSOLUTE	It gives a specific month, day, and year.
2	Before the trial began.	RELATIVE	It tells time in relation to the trial.
3	Three days after the vote.	RELATIVE	It tells time in relation to the vote.
4	At 6:45 p.m.	ABSOLUTE	It gives an exact clock time.
5	During the following winter.	RELATIVE	Following compares this time with an earlier event.
6	In 1865.	ABSOLUTE	It gives an exact year.
7	Friday, March 1, 2024.	ABSOLUTE	It gives a specific day and date.
8	At noon on July 4, 1776.	ABSOLUTE	It gives an exact clock time and date.

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)

- **ABSOLUTE:** In 2001.
- **RELATIVE:** After the meeting ended.

Challenge: On April 8, 2020, the library opened. Two hours later, visitors arrived. After the visitors left, the librarian locked the door.

For Part 2, students should point to exact dates, years, or clock times for absolute clues. For relative clues, students should identify comparison words or phrases, such as before, after, following, or days after.