

Mystery Word Riddles

Reinforcing Key Content Vocabulary Through Critical Thinking

Subject _____ Class _____ Date _____

Assignment Summary And Rationale

Writing and solving riddles helps to develop logical thinking and deductive reasoning skills. In this assignment, you will also build content knowledge and vocabulary. Your task is to design a set of clues leading to a single answer. The “answer” to your riddle may be a general academic or content-specific vocabulary word, a character in a book or historical figure, a number, an object—anything really! But your clues must be written so that they lead to one and only one correct answer.

Writer's Purpose	You are using logic to craft clues that gradually lead to exactly one solution.
Writer's Role	You are writing as an expert on an assigned word or topic.
Audience	You are writing for students who want to learn new words and enjoy solving puzzles.
Form	You will create a short riddle with clear and specific clues organized from broad to narrow. Each clue should begin with “I am” or “I have” (or similar), and your riddle should end with “Who (or what) am I?”
Focus Correction Areas	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 3-5 clues (magnifying glass with a 3-5 in it) 2. 3 or more word wall words (www) 3. One and only one correct answer (1A)
Procedure	<p>(Grades 1-2) To help you create your riddle, we will do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Type Two Writing: In one minute, list as many vocabulary words related to [selected topic] as you can think of. After you have finished, compare your list with a partner. Put a checkmark next to any words you have in common, and add at least two new words to your list. • We will share our lists as a class, correct spelling as needed, and look for any important words that we may be missing.

- Together, we will write a Mystery Riddle for a word that I choose. I will show you how to craft clues from broad to narrow and how to include vocabulary words from our class list. You will make sure I begin each sentence with “I,” and we will check that our clues lead to one and only one correct answer.
- I will assign you a word or topic or you will choose your own from a list.
- Draft your riddle. Remember to end with, “Who (or what) am I?”
- Read your writing out loud in a one-foot voice, and make any changes you think will improve it.
- Show me that you have followed each of the FCAs. Number your clues and make sure you have enough as designated by the first FCA. Circle your word wall words. On the back of your paper, record the answer to your riddle.
- We will listen to each other’s riddles and take turns guessing the Mystery Word or Topic.
- I might select a few of the best riddles (those that meet all of the criteria) and ask you to record them on index cards to use during class review times or as part of a game in the future.

For Kindergarten: Watch me as I draw a picture that will help you to guess a word. Notice how I start with a larger shape and add smaller and smaller details one at a time to help you guess. Once we have done this together several times, I will give you a secret word and we will try to guess what it is by looking closely at the clues in your picture. I might ask you to label the details in your picture without giving away your secret word. Once we can write sentences, I will give you a secret word and picture, and you will write clues to help me guess your word.