

## 3.2 What am I? riddles

**Focus** Speaking and Listening, especially reading aloud and responding to questions; Vocabulary, especially single words; (Optional) Writing, especially riddles

**Level** Intermediate

**Time** 10–20 minutes

**Materials and preparation** Choose handouts and make a class set so that every student has a list of 10–15 riddles but partners in a pair or trio have different riddles. Some of your students may not know what rhyme is. If so, teach or remind them. One way of doing this is by working with a song and its lyrics, making sure at some point that you ask your students to circle end-of-line words that rhyme. Draw link lines between words that rhyme with each other. Make sure they can hear how rhyming words share the same final vowel and consonant.

### In class

- 1 To make sure everyone knows what a riddle is, give them an easy one to puzzle out, for example: ‘I’m a good jumper like a bug. If a princess kisses me, I might turn into a prince.’ (a frog) If the class cannot guess the word from the clues just given, add a couple more clues, e.g. ‘I live in water. I’m green’. If they still haven’t guessed, tell them the answer and give another example: ‘I make the air difficult to see through. I’m like smoke but I don’t smoke. Wind blows me away. I’m a bit wet but not as wet as a cloud.’ (fog).
- 2 Say that they are going to work in pairs (or trios) and that you’ll give each person in each pair/trio a (different) list of riddles to read out to their partner(s), who should try to guess the answer. Stress that if the answer isn’t guessed, the reader should give out more clues of their own, and only after doing that should s/he say what the answer is. Stress also that listeners should *always* ask readers for clarifications when they haven’t understood something and that they should ask about unfamiliar words.
- 3 Hand out the lists and ask everyone to read their (own) riddles silently and try to understand them.
- 4 Give them any questions about vocabulary. But if someone still doesn’t understand their riddle, advise them to read it to their partner(s) anyway since quite often the partner will understand and will be able to explain it to the reader.
- 5 At the start of the exercise, tell students to agree with their partner whether each person should read out all the riddles before the next person has a turn or whether they will alternate back and forth like in a tennis game.

### Follow up

- 6 Ask them if they have learned anything about the world.
- 7 Ask students to write their own riddles.

### Note

Doing 'What am I?' riddles is a good follow on from [riddles](#) after we've paused when reading aloud (1.2).

### About the handouts for *What am I?* riddles

The level range for all of them is Intermediate. The handouts give the answers to the riddles.



# What am I? riddles

## Handout 3.2a

- 1 I have fur. I'm a wild dog. I live in a group. Red raw meat is what I love. At night, I howl. My first letter is *w*. What am I? (A wolf)
- 2 I travel in lines across the top of the sea. I make boats bob up and down. Storms make me big. When I hit the beach, I can make a loud, scary noise. Without me, you cannot surf. My first letter is *w*. What am I? (A wave)
- 3 I grow on palm trees. I am very popular in Arab countries. In Europe people eat me around Christmas. I'm the size of a child's thumb. I'm brown, very sweet, and a bit sticky. I'm a fruit. My first letter is *d*. What am I? (A date)
- 4 You need me between your fingers when you eat soup for lunch or supper. I have a handle with a kind of little bowl at one end. You can put me in the dishwasher after you use me. My second letter is *p*. I know you know what I am. (A spoon)
- 5 I'm like a fruit but I grow on the ground. Inside I can be yellow, red or even green. I can be as big as a person's head or even bigger. Usually I am sweet. I can be egg-shaped or round. My first letter is *m* and my last one is *n*. What am I? (A melon)
- 6 I'm breakable, so don't drop me. You can find me in a lamp. Sometimes, I am shaped like a pear. When electricity runs through me, I give out light. My first word is *light* and my second word begins with *b*. What am I? (A light bulb)
- 7 I'm an animal that can eat almost anything. I have four legs. I give milk. I can live quite well in dry countries although I am not a camel. I am a good climber. I make a sound a little bit like the sound of a sheep. My first letter is *g*. What am I? (A goat)
- 8 I am a liquid. I am made from petroleum. I catch fire very quickly. I am very expensive now. I can go. In Canada and the United States people call me *gas* or *gasoline*. In Britain, Ireland, Australia, and New Zealand, my first letter is *p*. What am I? (Petrol)
- 9 You can fold me. I keep me in a pocket (usually a back pocket) of their trousers. I hold money, notes, and credit cards and things like that. My first letter is *w*. What am I? (A wallet)
- 10 I am long and thin. People make me in factories. On the inside, I have copper (an orange-brown metal); on the outside I have a plastic 'skin'. In British English, my first word is *electric* and my second word begins with *l*. I carry electricity—for example from a wall to your television. What am I? (An electric lead)

# What am I? riddles

## Handout 3.2b

- 1 I'm the part of a plant that you can't see because I'm underground. I live in water and food. If I am part of a carrot, I am orange. My first letter is *r*. What am I? (The root)
- 2 I sit on top of a bottle. When I'm on, you can't drink the liquid inside. Sometimes, you have to turn me to open the bottle or maybe you have to pull me off. I am usually made of plastic but sometimes I'm made of metal. My first letter is *c*. What am I? (A cap)
- 3 You can find us on the tops of the ends of your fingers. Some people, especially women, may colour us with varnish. My first letter is *f*. What are we? (Fingernails)
- 4 You can find me in a wall, usually near the ceiling. If you put a plug in me, you can get electricity. My first two letters are *s* and *o*. What am I? (A socket)
- 5 You can find me at the top of your shirt around your neck. But you will never see me on a T-shirt. You can turn me up or down. Sometimes I have a button on each side. My first letter is *c*. What am I? (Collar)
- 6 I'm a bird about the size of a chicken but I can usually fly much better, especially if I am wild. If I am not wild, my feathers are white. I love water. When I speak, I go 'quack quack'. One of my famous relatives is named Donald. My first letter is *d*. What am I? (A duck)
- 7 In your nose, you can find two holes. That's us. Our first letter is *n*. What are we? (Your nostrils)
- 8 I'm soft, flat, and made of wool. If I come from Persia (or Iran), I am very expensive. If I am magic, I can spread me on a floor to make it warmer and more attractive. My first letter is *c*. What am I? (A carpet)
- 9 I am a country in Asia and I touch each other. With China, I share the highest mountain in the world. My first letter is *n*. What country am I? (Nepal)
- 10 Some people use me on bread instead of honey. I am sweet and sticky. Usually I am red but I can be purple or blue or even yellow, depending on the fruit I am made from. My first letter is *j*. What am I? (Jam)

# What am I? riddles

## Handout 3.2c

- 1 Traditionally, I am red, but I can be other colours too. I am a little bit of a thumb. If you look at me from the top or bottom, I am round. Women put me on their lips to make them more noticeable. Really I am two lips stuck together. My first letter is *l*. What am I? (Lipstick)
- 2 I am a coloured liquid. You can find me in a pen. I can help you write with me. Usually, I am blue or black. Teachers often like to use me if I am red. My first letter is *i*. What am I? (Ink)
- 3 I'm a container for coffee or tea, but I am not a cup because you don't put me on a saucer. Generally, I am a bit bigger than a cup. I have a handle, but my sides go straight up and down. My first letter is *m*. What am I? (A mug)
- 4 You can find me on sweatshirts and jackets. I have me, you don't need a hat. I have four letters and the first one is *h*. I rhyme with *good*. What am I? (A hood)
- 5 I'm a word. I'm the opposite of *thin* but my first letter is *t*, or *f*. You can use me to describe books and liquids. My first two letters are *t-h* and I rhyme with *quick*. What am I? (*Thick*)
- 6 I'm what you press to turn things off and on. Often you can find me next to a door. My first letter is *s*. What am I? (A switch)
- 7 We are like two sacks in your chest. You use us to breathe. You shouldn't fill us with smoke, or water. My first letter is *l*. What are we? (Lungs)
- 8 Businesspeople who wear a pair of trousers or a skirt and a jacket and sometimes also a waistcoat look best with a tie or scarf and with shiny leather shoes. My first letter is *s* and I rhyme with *boot*. What am I? (A suit)
- 9 I am a part of your arm. Doctors sometimes feel me to see how fast your heart is beating. I am between your forearm and your hand. You can wear a watch or bracelet on it. My first two letters are *w-r*. What am I? (A wrist)
- 10 I'm the opposite of a compliment. I'm not nice. People don't like to receive me. My first letter is *i* and I have two syllables. What am I? (An insult)