

## Riddles Rule

### Purpose

Students will begin to distinguish and interpret words with multiple meanings by using context clues (the meaning of the text around a word).

### Materials

*For the teacher:* chalk, chalkboard

*For the students:* books of riddles, such as *Funny You Should Ask:*

*How to Make Up Jokes and Riddles with Wordplay* by Marvin Terban

### Activity

#### A. Pre-Activity Discussion

1. Tell students a series of riddles that rely on homonyms to make the joke (e.g., Question: Why did the pony go to the doctor? Answer: He was a little hoarse. Question: What's the difference between a dressmaker and a nurse? Answer: One cuts the dresses and the other dresses the cuts). Write the riddles on the board.
2. After you tell your riddles, repeat them and have students explain why the ending was unexpected. Explain that the riddles rely on *homonyms*, words that sound the same, but which mean different things, to make the joke.

#### B. Create Riddles

1. Write a list of homonyms on the chalkboard (e.g., to, two, too; close, clothes; sail, sale; bear, bear, bare; aloud, allowed; so, sew, sow; pair, pare, pear; sent, scent, cent; blew, blue; patience, patients; die, dye; bow, bough; ball, bawl; ceiling, sealing).
2. Define the meaning of each word with students.
3. Have students come to the chalkboard and write a sentence using each word correctly.
4. With the class, create a riddle using a set of homonyms.

#### C. Close the Activity

1. Have students copy the sets of homonyms into their writing journals.
2. Encourage students to write more riddles using homonyms in their writing journals during the week.

### EXTENDING THE ACTIVITY



Divide the class into groups of four students. Have each group think of a riddle using one of the sets of homonyms on the chalkboard. Have students write the alternate spelling of the word in parentheses when they write their riddle [e.g., Why did the shopper head for the docks? Because he couldn't resist a sale! (sail)].

### connecting across the curriculum



#### Social Studies

Have students compare words used in British English to those in American English, e.g., "lift" for elevator, by providing the British usage in context and giving students the chance to determine their meaning. A list of words can be found at [www.accomodata.co.uk/amlsh.htm](http://www.accomodata.co.uk/amlsh.htm).


### Standards Link 4.1.2


## Questions for Review


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### Basic Concepts and Processes

After you have finished your riddles, review what students have learned by asking them the following questions:

 What is a *homonym*?

 What is an example of a homonym?

 What does [*insert word*] mean in the context of [*insert sentence*]?

 Why is it important to spell words correctly when you are writing?

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