



LESSON: Rocking Riddles

Grades: 1-3

Subject Areas: Language Arts

Estimated Time: 60 minutes

I. Summary: WordGirl continually saves the day with the help of her vocabulary and through her problem-solving skills. In this lesson, your students will be asked to use their creative thinking powers like WordGirl does! They will create a collection of portrait riddles that describe the main characters on WordGirl.

Riddles can be questions, statements, or descriptions that require the listener to figure out what is being described. They are a fun way to make people use their thinking powers because riddles are word puzzles; they require creativity and logic to solve the puzzle. Riddles can describe people, places, or things. The more specific hints given, using similes (comparison of two unlike things using the word "like" or "as"), detail and description, the better the riddle. Riddles may but do not need to rhyme.

For example:

I am the family pet. I am very loyal and as cuddly as a pillow. Usually I can be found helping save the day but I do not have any superpowers myself. I can't fly so I have to take the bus. I love to eat, especially bananas. What character from WordGirl am I?

II. Objectives:

- Students will learn how to write riddles
- Students will learn the importance of attention to detail in writing
- Students will practice the use of similes and descriptive writing
- Students will exercise their creative thinking powers

III. Materials:

- Paper
- Pen/pencil
- Folder
- Colored Pencils (optional)
- Examples of riddles

IV. Procedure:

1. What is a riddle? A riddle is a question or statement that requires thought to



answer or understand -- a sort of word puzzle. Read several examples of riddles to your students and point out the descriptive details and similes that are used.

2. Ask students to create a class riddle. As a group, choose a subject and invite students to offer similes and details to include. Write these on the blackboard. Decide as a group on the order of the clues. Explain that for the riddles the students independently create, they need to include at least five clues.

3. Now, shift gears, and invite your students to verbally describe each of the main characters on WordGirl. Consider categories of descriptive words. How does the character look, sound, move, dress? Challenge students to pinpoint unusual or telling details about the particular character, including any vocabulary words they associate with that character. Then ask students to make a list of characteristics for each character, based on class discussion.

4. Using their lists of characteristics, ask students to create a riddle for each of the main characters on WordGirl. If interested, when the riddles are completed, students may illustrate their written work.

5. Share student riddles orally. Encourage students to see the variety of similes and descriptive detail used in the riddles.

V. Assessment: Students should be able to define in conversational language what a riddle is. Students should be able to identify and create similes and other descriptive writing. Students should become aware that there is no limit to creative thinking.

VI. Extensions in Learning:

- Introduce students to synonyms -- a word that has the same or nearly the same meaning as another word. Reviewing the riddles created about WordGirl characters, ask students if they can think of any synonyms to replace some of the adjectives they have used. For example, if one of the adjectives used to describe Professor Two Brains was "crazy," see if students can think of other adjectives that say the same thing such as batty, cuckoo, mad, or bonkers. If students need assistance thinking of synonyms, instruct them on how to use a thesaurus.
- As a homework assignment, ask students to write riddles for each of their family members. Again, following the steps listed above, first ask students to compose a list of personal characteristics for each family member -- parent(s), sisters and/or brothers, grandparents, family pet -- and any particular words they associate with that person. Using that list, ask students to write a riddle about each family member. If interested, students may incorporate rhymes into the family portraits. They may finish the activity by illustrating their written work.



- Finally, make an anthology out of all the family portrait riddles. Illustrate a cover for the anthology and present it to the family. Ask students to read their riddles aloud and see if family members can figure out the answers!

Related National Standards: (These are established by McREL at URL:
<http://www.mcrel.org/standards-benchmarks/>)

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