

Simple Riddles

Normally, critical thinking is best taught in the students' best language. However, for the young learners with only basic language ability, trying to write their own riddles involves some critical thinking and some language learning.

Tell the students that they will be writing riddles later in the period. Make sure that the students know the names of the animals on the chart: cat, frog, chicken, fish, and snake.

Then, use the Student Worksheet to do some language work. The teacher can make copies for the students, but it is probably just as effective to write the chart on the board.

Use the chart to practice the language that the students will need later. For example, direct their attention to the animal in the second column, the cat. Work your way down the list of features, one-by-one, checking to see if each is a feature of a cat.

As you work down the list, write on the board, 'It has fur,' 'It has no feathers', 'It has no fins', and so on. After writing several sentences on the board, call on students in the class to get the remaining descriptions.

When you are satisfied that the class is comfortable with the vocabulary and the language involved, write the following riddle (based on the chart) on the board:

It has no fur.
It has no legs.
It has no beak.
It has no wings.
It has no fins.
What is it?

Having written this riddle on the board, continue by asking, "Is it a cat?" Most of the students will immediately recognize that it is not a cat, and answer, "No." (If the whole class answers "yes", you have a serious problem on your hands).

After they answer "no", ask, "Why not?" Of course, there are several possible answers, including "Because it has no fur" and "Because it has no legs."

Move on to the next animal. Ask, "Is it a frog?" Again, after they answer "no", ask, "Why not?" Again, there are several possible answers, including, "It has no legs", "Frogs have legs" and so on.

With a little more questioning, it becomes clear that it is also not a chicken ("It has no beak") or a fish ("It has no fins"). At this point, you can write, "It *must* be a snake."

Work through another riddle with the class. Make it up yourself or use the following riddle (based on the worksheet), "It has legs and a tail, but it has no wings or teeth. What is it?"

Write the riddle on the board and work through the animals one by one until the class realizes, "It must be a frog."

Using the animals in the chart, have each child write a riddle. Then, have the children exchange the riddles and see if their partner can figure out the right answer.

Student Worksheet

	cat	frog	chicken	fish	snake
fur					
feathers					
fins					
legs					
tail					
beak					
teeth					
wings					
it walks					
it flies					
it crawls					