

Riddles for EFL/ESL learners



The riddle is a form of guessing game that has been a part of the folklore of most cultures from ancient times. Western scholars generally recognize two main kinds of riddle: the descriptive riddle, usually describing an animal, person, plant, or object in an intentionally enigmatic manner (thus an egg is “a little white house without door or window”); and the brainy or witty question.

A story of Greek mythology tells that the Sphinx of Thebes asked a riddle and ate people who could not solve it. She asked, “What animal walks on four legs in the morning, two legs at noon, and three legs at night?” Eventually the Greek hero Oedipus gave the correct answer: a person. (A person crawls on all fours as an infant, walks on two legs when grown, and leans on a cane in old age.) Then the Sphinx killed herself.

Here riddles are offered for entertaining reading with the purpose of memorizing words.

If you are using **Adobe Reader** on Windows, you can find out the answer by clicking the numbers 1A, 2A, ... and so on, otherwise you will see the answers at the end of the parts.

Common riddles

1Q. A cowboy rode into town on Friday, stayed 2 days, then rode out of town on Friday. How did he do that?

[1A.](#) _____

2Q. A kind of tree can you carry in your hand?

[2A.](#) _____

3Q. All of Jenny's pets are dogs except one, and all of her pets are cats except one. How many cats and dogs does Jenny have?

[3A.](#) _____

4Q. An old fashioned bike wheel has 21 spokes. How many spaces are between the spokes - 20, 21, or 22?

[4A.](#) _____

5Q. I am full of holes, I can hold water. What am I?

[5A.](#) _____

6Q. I bind it and it walks. I loose it and it stops.

[6A.](#) _____

7Q. I can speak all the languages of the world. What am I?

[7A.](#) _____

8Q. I have a little house in which I live all alone. It has no doors or windows, and if I want to go out I must break through the wall.

[8A.](#) _____

9Q. I sleep in the day and I fly in the night. I have no feathers to aid my flight.

[9A.](#) _____

10Q. If you drop me I'll probably crack, but give me a smile and I'll always smile back. What am I?

[10A.](#) _____

11Q. I'm sometimes full, but I never overflow. What am I?

11A. _____

12Q. It stands on one leg with its heart in its head.

12A. _____

13Q. It's been around for millions of years, but it's no more than a month old. What is it?

13A. _____

14Q. Mr. Smith has 4 daughters. Each of his daughters has a brother. How many children does Mr. Smith have?

14A. _____

15Q. Poor people have it. Rich people need it. If you eat it you die. What is it?

15A. _____

16Q. Some months have thirty days and some months have thirty-one days. How many months have twenty-eight days?

16A. _____

17Q. The more you take, the more you leave behind. What are they?

17A. _____

18Q. What are two things people never eat before breakfast?

18A. _____

19Q. What asks no question but demands an answer?

19A. _____

20Q. What belongs to you but others use it more than you do?

20A. _____

21Q. What bird can lift the most?

[21A.](#) _____

22Q. What can't be used until it's broken?

[22A.](#) _____

23Q. What fastens two people yet touches only one?

[23A.](#) _____

24Q. What gets wet when drying?

[24A.](#) _____

25Q. What goes round and round the wood but never goes into the wood?

[25A.](#) _____

26Q. What goes round the house and in the house but never touches the house?

[26A.](#) _____

27Q. What has 4 legs and only 1 foot?

[27A.](#) _____

28Q. What has a head and a tail but no body?

[28A.](#) _____

29Q. What has a head like a cat, feet like a cat, a tail like a cat, but isn't a cat?

[29A.](#) _____

30Q. What has a neck, but no head?

[30A.](#) _____

31Q. What has five eyes, but cannot see?

31A. _____

32Q. What has many keys but can't open any doors?

32A. _____

33Q. What has teeth but can't bite?

33A. _____

34Q. What has three feet but no legs or arms?

34A. _____

35Q. What has two hands and a face, but no arms and legs?

35A. _____

36Q. What is as big as an elephant but doesn't weigh anything?

36A. _____

37Q. What is that you will break even when you name it?

37A. _____

38Q. What is it that we often return but never borrow?

38A. _____

39Q. What is it that you can keep after giving it to someone else?

39A. _____

40Q. What is it the more you take away the larger it becomes?

40A. _____

41Q. What is the hardest thing about learning to roller skate?

41A. _____

42Q. What is the longest word in the English language?

42A. _____

43Q. What is the shortest month?

43A. _____

44Q. What is the tallest building in the world?

44A. _____

45Q. What teaches without talking?

45A. _____

46Q. What walks all day on its head?

46A. _____

47Q. When is the best time to have lunch?

47A. _____

48Q. Where does Friday come before Thursday?

48A. _____

49Q. Who are the two brothers who live on opposite sides of the road yet never see each other?

49A. _____

50Q. You are my brother, but I am not your brother. Who am I?

50A. _____

Common riddles – answers

1. His horse is named Friday
2. A palm
3. Jenny has one cat and one dog
4. 21
5. A sponge (synthetic or natural material used for bathing)
6. sandal
7. An echo
8. A chicken in an egg
9. A bat
10. A mirror

11. The moon
12. Cabbage
13. The moon
14. He has 5 children
15. Nothing
16. All twelve months have 28 days
17. Footsteps
18. Lunch and a supper
19. A doorbell or a ringing telephone
20. Your name

21. Crane
22. An egg
23. A wedding ring
24. A towel
25. The bark of a tree
26. The sun
27. A bed
28. A coin
29. A kitten
30. A bottle

31. The Mississippi River has five eyes!
32. A piano
33. A comb
34. A yard
35. A clock
36. The shadow of an elephant
37. Silence
38. Thanks
39. Your word
40. What is it the more you take away the larger it becomes?
40. A hole.

41. The ground
42. SMILES - there is a mile between the 1st and last letters.
43. May, it has only 3 letters.
44. A library because it has the most stories.
45. A book
46. A nail in a horseshoe.
47. After breakfast
48. In the dictionary
49. Eyes
50. I am your sister.

Letter riddles

1Q. What 4 days of the week start with the letter "T"?

1A. _____

2Q. What 4-letter word can be written forward, backward or upside down, and can still be read from left to right?

2A. _____

3Q. What always ends everything?

3A. _____

4Q. What can turn a lad into a lady?

4A. _____

5Q. What can you always find in the middle of a taxicab?

5A. _____

6Q. What comes once in a minute, twice in a moment, but never in a thousand years?

6A. _____

7Q. What is at the end of a rainbow?

7A. _____

8Q. What is the centre of gravity?

8A. _____

9Q. What is the coldest letter?

9A. _____

10Q. What is the difference between here and there?

10A. _____

11Q. What is the most important thing in the world?

11A. _____

12Q. What letter comes after B in the alphabet?

12A. _____

13Q. What letter comes once in a minute, twice in a moment and never in a thousand years?

13A. _____

14Q. What letter is like an island?

14A. _____

15Q. What letter is like an rest?

15A. _____

16Q. What letter is like death?

16A. _____

17Q. What letter is like New Year's Day?

17A. _____

18Q. What letter is like noon?

18A. _____

19Q. What letter is like the sun?

19A. _____

20Q. What letter is the cleanest in the alphabet?

20A. _____

21Q. What letter of the alphabet is a drink?

21A. _____

22Q. What letter of the alphabet is an insect?

22A. _____

23Q. What letter widens a road?

23A. _____

24Q. What occurs twice in a week, once in a year but never in a day?

24A. _____

25Q. What three letters change a girl into a woman?

25A. _____

26Q. Which letter is like a ring around your finger?

26A. _____

27Q. Why is the letter "F" like Paris?

27A. _____

28Q. Why is the letter "U" the jolliest letter?

28A. _____

29Q. Why is the letter "E" like London?

29A. _____

30Q. You find me in December, but not in any other month. What am I?

30A. _____

Letter riddles – answers

1. Tuesday, Thursday, today and tomorrow. 2. NOON 3. The letter G.
4. The letter Y. (lad = a boy or young man) 5. The letter I. 6. The letter M.
7. The letter W. 8. The letter V. 9. The letter C is in middle of ice. 10. The letter T.

11. The letter "E" because it is first in everybody and everything. 12. The letter E (aphabEt).
13. The letter M. 14. Letter T is in the middle of water. 15. The letter K comes at the end of work.
16. The letter E is at the end of life. 17. The letter J is the first of January.
18. The letter A is in the middle of day. 19. The letter G is in the centre of light.
20. The letter H because it is in the middle of washing.

21. The letter "T" = tea. 22. The letter "B" = bee. 23. The letter B makes it broad.
24. The letter E. 25. Age 26. The letter O. 27. Because both are the capital of France.
28. Because it is in the middle of fun. 29. Because E is the capital of England 30. The letter D.