

A Furry Riddle

poem by Stephen Whiteside | photo by Alamy

ACELT1603 | EN2-11D

Evaluate a variety of riddles, discussing preferences and identifying reasons, by following the steps below:

- Read a variety of riddles, using sites such as [RiddlesandAnswers](#).
- Display the following discussion questions for students to consider when examining each riddle:

Is the subject matter of the riddle easy to identify? (i.e. can the riddle be solved easily)

Are the features for identifying the subject matter familiar? (e.g. wings/flight for a bird)

Do they provide new information/a new way of looking at the world? If so, what unique ideas does the riddle present? (e.g. a leaf as subservient to the branch)

Sort the riddles into those students enjoyed and those they did not.

- Share 'A Furry Riddle', initially hiding the image and the solution to the riddle. Analyse the clues. Discuss students suggestions about the subject matter before revealing it is a possum's gliding membranes. Students may identify that the subject matter is quite challenging to identify. Instruct students to decide whether to add this with the group of riddles they like or those they do not.
- Analyse the riddle using the same discussion questions as earlier. Sample ideas may include that the riddle provides unique ways of viewing the subject matter that students haven't previously considered, for example that they can be floppy or curly and that they do not have meat.
- Instruct students to focus on the riddles they particularly enjoyed, looking for common elements. Questions students could consider include: do I prefer riddles I find predictable? Do I favour riddles that provide a unique way of looking at a subject?
- Discuss responses, encouraging students to provide reasons for their choices.

One Woolly Jumper

story by [Marian McGuinness](#) | illustrated by [Sylvia Morris](#)

ACELT1604 | EN2-4A

Analyse examples of onomatopoeia in the text, by following the stages outlined below.

- Identify the first example of onomatopoeia in the text (e.g. "Clickety-clack, clickety-clack"). Ask students whether they can initially tell what was making this sound. Most likely they'll answer that they cannot. Identify the source (Bonnie's mother's knitting needles).
- Identify how the author makes the source of the sound clear (by explicitly stating what causes the sound, in the line, "Bonnie found her mum in the kitchen, knitting.").
- Discuss possible reasons why the author used onomatopoeia here, rather than stating explicitly what Bonnie can hear (e.g. 'All Bonnie heard was the sound of knitting needles.'). Sample answers might include that the use of onomatopoeia enhances engagement, providing a connection to Bonnie's world through what she hears, or that it engages the sense of sound, adding to the vivid picture of the scene in reader's minds.
- Identify the next example of onomatopoeia ("Baaaa baaaa"). Discuss students interpretation of the source of the sound, ensuring they are aware that the source is a sheep. Highlight that the source of this sound doesn't need to be explicitly stated until later in the text as readers are familiar with what makes this sound.
- Instruct students to create a two-column table. In the first column, tell them to write examples of onomatopoeia from the text where they can immediately identify the source. In the second column, tell students to list those examples where the source is not instantly recognised.

The first rows might look something like the example below:

Examples of onomatopoeia where the source can be immediately identified	Examples of onomatopoeia where the source is vague/cannot be immediately identified
Baaaa Baaaa	Clickety-clack

- Instruct students to add further examples of both types of onomatopoeia to the table. For example, woof or purr, for those that can be easily identified and zoom, or whoosh for those which cannot.

Extension: Students could add examples of sources for each of the sounds they included in the second column of the table. Sample ideas include, zoom went the space rocket or whoosh went the wind.

Homophones

A homophone is a word that sounds the same as another word, but may have a different spelling. 'Hair' and 'hare' are homophones.

PART A

Read the story 'One Woolly Jumper'. Now find homophones for each of the words below.

tale	_____	there	_____	weight	_____
bean	_____	weak	_____	four	_____
pear	_____	sum	_____	peace	_____
whole	_____	thyme	_____	sore	_____

PART B

Select the correct homophone to complete each of the sentences below.

1. Your or you're?

_____going to need a lot of woolly jumpers.

Is that _____ lamb?

2. Wood or would?

_____ you help me knit?

The box is made from polished_____ .

3. Their or there?

Last time we were _____ it was so noisy.

My friends said I could borrow _____ knitting patterns.

4. No or know?

I do not _____ if I will be finished in time.

_____, you may not play on the computer.

Falling

poem by Elena de Roo | illustrated by [Marjorie Crosby-Fairall](#)

[ACELY1688](#) | [EN2-1A](#)

Create a poem, using the organisation of words on the page to direct pace, by completing the following:

- Display the following two sentences, "I ran," and, "I went as quickly as I could to escape." Experiment reading them both, discussing which would be read more quickly (the first) and suggest reasons for this (the fewer number of words in the line). Inform students that writers often deliberately vary the length of their sentences to create pace in their writing.
- Instruct students to write the word 'fast' on a piece of paper or an individual whiteboard. View the poem [A Short, Summery Thin Thong Song](#) on The School Magazine's YouTube channel. Tell students prior to viewing the video to hold their 'fast' sign aloft every time they hear the pace quicken (e.g. at lines such as, "flip, flap, flong," and, "silly old laces").
- Discuss how the lines identified might look in printed text (e.g. fewer words in the faster paced lines).

Apply this knowledge the poem, Falling, by doing the following:

- Examine the organisation of the lines on the page (ranging from one word per line to those with more words).
- Discuss how these lines might be read (faster paced for the shorter lines).
- Model reading the first few lines aloud, experimenting with pace based on the number of words in the line, for example reading, "dance," and "down," at a faster pace than lines with more words, such as, "like golden snow".
- Discuss reasons for the varying length of the lines in the poem (e.g. it highlights the speed at which the leaves are falling, it provides contrast with lines where the leaves are moving in a floatier manner etc.).

Provide students with a range of objects that would move at differing speeds, e.g. wheels that would roll quickly and a slow gliding paper parachute. Experiment with each object. Record vocabulary on post-it-notes or individual whiteboards to describe the way it moves.

Use the descriptions to collaboratively create a poem describing a range of movements.

Use the organisation of words on a line, to communicate the pace. For example:

Roll,

Roll,

Roll,

Goes the wheel.

Gliding, gently through the air,

floats the paper plane.

Rosemary For Remembrance

activity by Emma Heyde | illustrated by [Peter Sheehan](#)

[ACELY1687](#) | [EN2-1A](#)

Experiment with listening for key points in order to be able to carry out a task, by following the steps outlined below:

- Focus students attention on the section headed, 'Growing you own rosemary plant'. Ensure students are aware of the type of text here (procedure). Discuss common features, ensuring students identify the following:
 - the instructions are organised in ordered steps
 - imperative verbs are used to begin each sentence such as, "fill," and, "strip"
- Tell students to create an imaginary task. Some ideas you might like to suggest include, adding jelly to the engine of a spacecraft to make it fly, or using the wings of a bee to write in tiny handwriting, on the tip of a pin.
- Instruct students to create a procedure outlining how to complete this imaginary task. Remind them to organise the information into ordered steps and to include imperative verbs.
- Provide an example, of a fictitious procedure, such as the one below
 1. Mix enough strawberry jelly to fill one swimming pool.
 2. Roll an A4 page from your homework book, to create a funnel.
 3. Pour the jelly through the funnel, at a 90-degree angle.
 4. Climb in your spacecraft and turn on the engine.
- Model acting out these steps, e.g. using arm movements to mime mixing over a large area, before rolling the mixture.
- Instruct students to orally share their procedures with a partner. Tell the rest of the students that they'll need to listen carefully to the instructions.
- Instruct the students to mime the steps, based on their partner's procedure. Share responses, examining how closely the mimes match the steps in each procedure.

Treasure!

article by Emma Heyde | photos courtesy Museum of London

[ACELY1690](#) | [EN2-8B](#)

Examine the use of second person and present tense to inspire personal engagement, by following the steps below:

- Read the first column of text, pausing right before the line, "Did something like this really happen?"
- Display the following statements, instructing students to identify those describing their response to the text so far:

I feel uninspired and uninterested in the story

I feel personally connected to the story

I am not interested to know what happens next

I feel hooked to the story

I do not feel personally connected to the story

I am keen to know what happens next

- Most likely, the majority of students will identify that they feel personally engaged in the story, hooked in it and keen to know what happens next.
- Re-read the column, instructing students to identify elements that assisted with generating this response. Sample answers include, the use of the second person, 'you,' and presenting the information in present tense, e.g. "You're in Cheapside..." "You're working down in the cellar..."
- Inform students how these language devices can be used to assist with world-building, creating engagement in the reader.

Apply this knowledge to the remainder of the text by completing the following steps:

- Continue reading the text. Instruct students to first focus on the information, under the heading, "Exquisite luxuries".
- Discuss the change of style (the third person and past tense is employed). Model thinking aloud, experimenting with adapting this passage to match the style utilized earlier in the text.
- For example, 'You stumble across the most elaborately bejeweled scent bottle you have ever seen. You are delighted with the find, relieved to have something to finally mask the stench of rotten teeth and sewage you are so often confronted with.'

- Instruct students to work in groups, continuing to adapt the text to employ the style features identified earlier.

Encourage students to share their adapted paragraphs with a different group of students, who are unfamiliar with the text, perhaps a buddy class or different year group. Provide these students with the same list of statements displayed earlier. Instruct them to identify statements from the list that apply to their response to the paragraphs. Finally, reveal to the same students the original paragraph, and ask them to identify which hooked them more.

Now's Good

story by [Melinda Szymanik](#) | illustrated by [Douglas Holgate](#)

[ACELT1607](#) | [EN2-10C](#)

Create a text, using characters' fears to create tension, by following the stages outlined below:

- Discuss the differences between Kit and Fiona's opinion of the bilycart. Identify how the author demonstrates this (e.g. with Kit eagerly awaiting its launch, while Fiona describes the bilycart as, "A terrible thing," and is fearful of riding on it). Highlight how Fiona's cautiousness adds tension to the plot, making readers apprehensive about what will happen.
- Read the play, *Brave Dave in the Cave*, found in this issue of *Blast Off*, page 30. Discuss the character's fears (Blondee being afraid of the dark, Brando fearful of snakes). Reflect on how the element of fear again adds tension to the text.

Experiment with using fear to add tension.

- Discuss activities or hobbies students take part in (e.g. sports, drama, skateboarding, scootering etc.).
- Tell students to imagine they are a character, encouraged to take part in this activity for the first time. Inform students that their character is nervous of this activity.
- Create a Video, outlining their character fears about being asked to take part in this activity. Provide an example, such as: Tomorrow is the dreaded day. There's no escaping it. I'm doomed. Blake is going to make me step up on that awful skateboard. And in front of everyone. I feel sick just thinking about it.
- Share students' videos, highlighting how the description of fear adds tension.

Reading between the lines

1. Why did Fiona search for their bike helmets?

2. Why did Kit raise his eyebrows and grin when he saw Fiona dressed in the protective clothing?
(Put an 'x' next to the correct answer.)

- a) He thought it was a good idea.
- b) He thought she looked amusing.
- c) He thought she must have been cold.

3. Why did Fiona raise her eyebrows when she saw Kit was only dressed in a T-shirt and shorts?
(Put an 'x' next to the correct answer.)

- a) She thought he should be wearing more protective clothing.
- b) Her eyebrow was itchy.
- c) She thought he was dressed well.

4. Why do you think Kit 'sniffed the wind, licked his index finger and held it up, then scooped a handful of leaves off the ground and threw them into the air' when they were about to set off on the billycart?
(Put an 'x' next to the correct answer.)

- a) He likes playing with leaves.
- b) He was trying to check the wind direction.
- c) He was tidying up the footpath.

5. Explain why Fiona's head looked like an oversized lollipop.

6. Explain why Kit yanked hard on the rope once they had set off.

7. What does the phrase 'Suddenly Kit knew the cart wasn't his anymore' mean?
(Put an 'x' next to the correct answer.)

- a) He was going to give it to Fiona.
- b) He didn't want the cart any longer.
- c) He no longer had control of the billycart.

8. Explain why Kit was screaming at Fiona to pull the sticks that acted as breaks.

9. Explain why Fiona did not pull the sticks when Kit gave her the instruction 'Now!'

Flighty

poem by Jackie Hosking | illustrated by [Tohby Riddle](#)

[ACELA1496](#) | [EN2-8B](#)

Explore elements of composition in illustrations, analysing images using a thirds grid, by following the steps detailed below:

- Inform students that photographers and illustrators use ideas about composition when creating images, to direct the viewer's attention away to or towards particular elements.
- Examine images on sites such as [What is the Rule of Thirds?](#). Inform students that while the images on this site are photographs, the same principals apply to illustrations. Highlight how each image has been separated into thirds vertically and horizontally (creating nine rectangles in all).
- Discuss where the elements in each image fall within these lines (i.e. often within the lines of thirds).
- Using either a photocopy of the illustration from the text (ideally in colour), the magazine itself, or a digital version, sketch grid lines over the image. Create thirds, both vertically and horizontally. Alternatively, the lines could be drawn on tracing paper/baking paper then laid over the image.
- Identify where each element in the image falls within the marked grid. For example, the house appears in the top right rectangle while the kangaroos occupy much of the bottom third, horizontally.
- Instruct students to place post-it-notes over each the rectangles, noting on the front the element in the image underneath. Where there are complete rectangles of blank space (e.g. mostly for the sky) use a different coloured post-it-note. Continue this until the image is covered.

Discuss the following:

- Where are the elements of blank space? (e.g. mostly top third, upper left and upper middle) Are these sky or land? (mostly sky)
- Why might the illustrator have included this much blank space? (e.g. to imply the vastness of the area)
- How much space do the kangaroos occupy? (Most of the bottom third and some of the middle, horizontally)
- What does this imply? (this makes them the focal point of the image)

Extension

Connect this concept to the image that accompanies the poem *Falling*, also in this issue of *Blast Off*, by following the steps below:

- Again, draw a grid over the image, or reuse the tracing/baking paper. Use post-it-notes to label the elements, fixing notes of a different colour to rectangles that feature mostly blank space.
- Analyse both sets of post-it-notes. Count the post it notes in the colour dedicated to blank space in both illustrations. Consider the post-it-notes showing the action. Discuss similarities between both images (e.g. that most of the top third is sky/blank space and that most of the action occurs in the bottom third horizontally).

Adding details to settings

In the poem 'Flighty' the author has created a vivid setting using language and imagery. Practise creating more interesting settings by completing the activities below.

PART A

Add detail to the settings below. The first one has been done for you.

Statement	Detail
The house was deserted.	Dust had created a thick blanket over the counters. A musty smell lingered in the air.
The house was tidy.	
The house was messy.	

PART B

Add detail to the settings below. The first one has been done for you.

Setting: A cold beach	Detail: The wind whipped the sand up in the air. The ocean was a deep blue and it crashed on the beach in angry waves.
Setting: A dark forest	Detail:
Setting: A dry desert	Detail:

PART C

On the lines below, describe the view from your nearest window.

Now add supporting details to describe your view, e.g. if it's a park, all the trees are swaying in the gentle breeze.

Will Wonders Never Cease? Modern Military Mascots

article by [Zoë Disher](#) | photo courtesy Department of Defence

[ACELA1780](#) | [EN2-5A](#)

Compose sentences using homophones from the text.

Display the following two sentences, with the homophones omitted:

I went ____ school.

I bought ____ apples.

Discuss which word would best complete each sentence (i.e. two for the first sentence, two for the second). Inform students that these are called homophones. Define homophones, telling students that homophones are words that sound the same, but have both different spellings and meanings.

Read 'Will Wonders Never Cease? Military Mascots'. Identify homophones in the text (e.g. there, for, to, be, two, in, too, blue, role, their). Jot these on the board for students to refer to later. Discuss the homophone pairs for each of the words identified (e.g. their, four, two/too, bee etc.).

Provide students with the following sentences and instruct them to select the best homophone to correctly complete each sentence. Alternatively, students could complete the interactive activity online if you have a digital subscription.

The eagle will ____ assisting the army. (be or bee)

The eagle flies ____ their trainer. (two, too or to)

The man has a ____ triangle on his hat. (blue or blew)

Experiment with using homophones, creating captioned freeze-frames, by following the steps below:

- Refer students to the list of homophones on the board. Instruct students to orally compose their own sentence featuring one of the homophones (e.g. I am going to the shops).
- Instruct students to create freeze-frames, freezing in position show themselves acting out their sentence. For example, they could clutch a bag and stand mid stride, aiming towards another student who is standing behind a desk, to show the sentence - I went to the shops. Instruct students to photograph their freeze-frames.
- Tell them to insert their photographs into a design program such as [Canva](#) or Microsoft Powerpoint. Instruct students to caption their images, using the correct homophone.

Locating information

Subheadings and key words can help you locate information in texts. Use the subheading mentioned in the question to locate the correct answer. Write your answer on the lines provided.

Part A

1. When did the animal mascot tradition first begin?

2. What rank do animals normally start at?

3. What is the most important duty of all animal mascots?

Part B

Under which of the following subheadings would you find information about these topics?

1. Information about when animal mascots were first introduced would be found under the subheading:

a) A continuing tradition b) Rank and file c) Formal duties

2. Information about being promoted to higher ranks would be found under the subheading:

a) A continuing tradition b) Rank and file c) Formal duties

3. Information about the work mascots have to do would be found under the subheading:

a) A continuing tradition b) Rank and file c) Formal duties

Part C

Use the key words in the question to help you to find the information in the text.

1. Who was demoted to rank of trooper after bad behaviour?

2. Name two animals in the Australian Army.

3. Can reptiles be mascots?

Of Course

story by David Hill | illustrated by Lesley Vamos

ACELT1605 | EN2-10C

Analyse how authors make readers care about characters choices and their consequences:

- Read the text, pausing at the end of page 27. Discuss students' opinions about mum's healthy eating campaign. For example, students may feel empathy for the family and think that mum should let them have a treat once in a while.
- Discuss elements in the text that assisted students when drawing their conclusions (e.g. the other members of the family dreaming about treat food inspires empathy for their situation in the reader).

Keep reading.

- Identify the choices dad faces when the salad bowl overturns (whether to tell mum or not and what to provide for lunch instead). Discuss extracts that reveal why this is a challenging choice for dad (he is described as always supporting mum, in the line, "He always sticks up for mum, even if he doesn't agree with her," but he has also been craving fish and chips, revealed through the line, "'I had a dream of fish and chips and jam pudding last night,' said dad."). Discuss the tension created by these two conflicting priorities.
- Instruct students to share how they feel to discover dad is going to buy the family fish and chips for lunch (e.g. excited for them). Conduct a hunt in the text, identifying anything that assisted the reader caring about that choice (e.g. descriptions of how challenging the family found eating healthily, with Meg sighing when she reached for the salad bowl).

Experiment applying this idea, following the steps below:

- Identify the potential choice at the end, when mum turns up with the fish and chips (either to own up to having already had fish and chips for lunch or to eat the food without telling mum the secret).
- Consider ways to add additional tension, making the choice even harder (e.g. including information about how mum gets really upset about people lying to her or that the characters may vomit if they eat any more).
- Add these additional elements to the text, noting additions in the margins or writing them on post-it-notes and fixing them to the page.
- Create a final paragraph, adding the choice the characters made.

- Share responses, identifying the elements of tension that made readers care further about the character's choices.

Brave Dave in the Cave

play by Peter Hudson | illustrated by Lesley Vamos

[ACELT1794](#) | [EN2-2A](#)

Create a video report, detailing the crime the characters committed:

- Identify the meaning of the word [bandit](#), using an online dictionary. Ensure students are clear that they are thieves or travelling outlaws.
- Place post-it-notes next to any lines in the play, that provide clues about the crime the bandits may have committed.
- Some examples include: "Do you think we gave them the slip?" "In the morning, we'll all walk free," and, "Just remember—we're the bravest gang in the world."
- Discuss inferences students may make. Some ideas might be, that the bandits are being chased, that they are hoping whoever is following them will be gone by the morning and whatever they did must have been very daring.

Identify ideas for crimes the bandits may have committed, by following the steps below:

- In groups, discuss suggestions for what the bandits may have done. You may wish to provide visual stimulus here, such as images of diamonds they might have stolen.
- Role play ideas, discussing the merits of each until students decide on a particular theory.
- View a video report on crime, such as one on [Cyber Crime](#) from Behind the News. Highlight how the reporter describes the crime in detail and includes possible motives.
- Create a video report, similar in style to the one from Behind the News, outlining the bandit's actions and why they committed the crime.
- Some ideas to get you started might be that they stole the Queen's most expensive crown, scaling the walls and lowering themselves down into the crown room using ropes. They're great climbers, making it easy for them to escape capture. Their motive was to obtain money for their family.
- Record responses using video recording software such as iMovie. Create videos with images and sounds in PowerPoint and add these to the report.

Sock Explorers

Poem by Sandi Leibowitz | illustrated by [Andrew Joyner](#)

[ACELY1695](#) | [EN2-2A](#)

Experiment with editing text, to improve content and structure, by following the steps below:

- Identify the structure of the poem (featuring rhyming couplets, with pairs of lines that rhyme).
- Tell students that something from the class has gone missing, for example a ball or a special pen. Ask students to think about where it might go. Provide examples, such as down the back of the chair, taken by mistake to another classroom or dropped down the drain.
- Identify rhyming words for each of the ideas (e.g. hair, broom and rain). List these on the board. Encourage students to add additional rhyming words to each of the words listed.
- Re-examine the poem. Identify the most common word used to refer to the socks ('some').
- Place students in pairs. Instruct them to create a rhyming couplet, beginning with the sentence starter 'some'. Provide an example, such as: some pens get lost down the back of a chair, or go on a journey through someone's hair.
- Allow time for students to create their couplets and to type them using word processing software, such as Microsoft Word.

Compile the couplets. Read them through as a whole poem. Work collaboratively, editing the collaborative poem to improve content and structure, following the steps below:

- Re-read the collaborative poem. Highlight elements that are repetitive, or that inhibit the flow, using the digital highlighting tool. For example, the repetitive use of the word, 'some', or using the same examples of rhyming words in various couplets, e.g. 'chair' and 'hair'.
- Re-read the text. Examine how the poet has used synonyms and varied the structure of sentences, to avoid overusing the word 'some', for example, with the line, "Occasionally a brave, hardy sole".
- Discuss ways to edit the collaborative poem, to improve the flow. For example, using synonyms, such as 'writing implement,' 'scribe,' 'texta' etc. to avoid overusing the word pen.

- Discuss couplets where students believe the rhyme or structure could be improved. Encourage students to suggest replacements and edit the text with these additions.
- Re-read the collaborative poem, using the [thinking aloud strategy](#) to highlight where the flow has improved. Inform students that often writers edit multiple times.