

Mystery Riddles

Riddles are fun word games. First graders can benefit from creating riddles because it gives them practice in brainstorming descriptive clues and presenting them to others in a way that makes sense.

In this activity, your child gets to tell riddles while at the same time putting on a dramatic and spooky show for an unsuspecting family member. He'll also get a chance to practice reading and writing skills in a relaxed, practical way. Little sisters, beware! The "Monster Marking" is here!

What You Need:

- White crayon
- White paper
- Watercolor paint in a deep color, such as blue or red (not yellow)



What You Do:

1. Have your child use the white crayon to write a short message on the white paper. Be sure that he does this in private, so that no one else can see what he is writing.
2. Now have him select an unsuspecting family member and tell that person that a monster has written a secret message on his paper. He can then give clues about what "the monster" wrote. He can tell, for example, the number of words or the number of letters. He can give a hint about the general subject of his message, or he can drop specific clues about its meaning, for example, "It's something we find in the kitchen."
3. To reveal the secret message, you (or whoever is being "spooked") will take out a watercolor set and paint the whole paper. The waxy crayon will resist the waterbased paint, and the message will seem to pop out of nowhere.

This activity makes a fabulous "clue" or "treasure map" set for a treasure hunt, too. No matter how you use it, you're giving your child invaluable practice with literacy. Words are never just worksheet items; they're all around us, and they're the foundation of how we communicate all the time. There's really no such thing as "overdoing" practice when you can combine it with old-fashioned fun.

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