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About This Book

This book offers a collection of fun, alliterative riddles for students in Grades 4 – 8. Ideas for words have come from many sources including the *New York Times* and *The New Yorker*. Decoding the riddles can be an impetus for incorporating dynamic words into students' lexicons and their writing. As a bonus, many of the words appear on ACT and SAT vocabulary lists.

Unlocking each letter's misfortune exposes the reader to four vocabulary words. Some of the words may sound familiar, but to understand the gist of the riddle, all four words are needed. A series of questions after each riddle prompts analysis of the vocabulary. Words are sorted by definition, synonym, antonym, and part of speech.

The last activity asks students to synthesize the meaning of all four vocabulary words. From four sentences, they choose the most fitting representation of the riddle's main idea. To accomplish this, each of the sentence's four synonyms must be evaluated for its compatibility with the riddle's word.

Decoding the Riddles

Here are some helpful hints:

- The best approach is to read through all of the questions before trying to answer any of them. Some of the words are similar in meaning with only nuances between them.
- Pay attention to the part of speech for the synonyms and antonyms as it is another clue.
- To decipher parts of speech, remember verbs ending in the suffix –ing can be gerunds which act as nouns. Verbs ending in the suffixes –ing and –ed can be participles which act as adjectives. Look closely at how the word is used.
- For pronunciation of words and definitions, consult a dictionary.
- Remember, many words have multiple meanings. To select the sentence with the appropriate synonyms, consider the context of the original word.

About The Author

Diane Hartsig earned a journalism degree from Michigan State University and an elementary education degree from Western Michigan University. She is in her eighth year of teaching and is currently a fifth grade teacher in Dowagiac, Michigan. Diane was inspired to write *Vocabulary Riddles A to Z Catastrophes* because she spends so much of her school day interpreting unknown words for students. She lives in Dowagiac with her husband and three children.



A's arrant asperity made him alienated and abhorred.

1. Which word means "to feel hatred or loathing for?" _____
2. "Unmitigated" is a synonym for which word? _____
3. "Amiability" is an antonym for which word? _____
4. Which word means "to make isolated?" _____
5. "Abhorred" is used as what part of speech? noun verb adjective adverb
6. Choose the sentence that best decodes the riddle.
 - a. A's undue loudness made him unpopular and deplored.
 - b. A's extreme harshness made him estranged and resented.
 - c. A's absolute bitterness made him miserable and detested.
 - d. A's profound ignorance made him disillusioned and despised.



Despite the admonishments, an audacious A ambled into the abyss.

1. Which word means "a scolding or rebuke?" _____
2. "Chasm" is a synonym for which word? _____
3. "Yielding" is an antonym for which word? _____
4. Which word means "to walk or move at a slow pace?" _____
5. "Audacious" is used as what part of speech? noun verb adjective adverb
6. Choose the sentence that best decodes the riddle.
 - a. In spite of the warning, anxious A wandered into the hole.
 - b. With no regard to the directions, senseless A bounded into the emptiness.
 - c. Disregarding the lecture, shameless A romped into the confusion.
 - d. In defiance of the advice, brash A strolled into the crevasse.

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