

Riddle Craft

Rules

Players



3–6

Ages



12+

Time



30'

Story

On an archaeological expedition, you discover the ancient tome of riddles that you had long been searching for—sadly, its pages are torn to shreds beyond hope of reassembly. Your hopes dashed, you decide to raise your spirits by using the fragments of riddles that remain to hold a contest of wits and riddle-making with your friends at the local tavern...

Overview

All players collectively build one riddle together per round. The riddle grows more complicated with each player's turn until one player challenges another to answer the riddle—points are then given according to whether the answer is valid. The player with the most points at the end wins the game. The game lasts at least 7 rounds.

Each card has a fragment of a riddle on it (these are **Riddle Cards**). These fragments can be put together to create riddles. The question you must answer for each riddle is: “*What am I?*”

This game includes 118 **Riddle Cards**, 6 **When Cards**, 7 **tokens**, and 7 **tokens**.

Setup

Put the 7 **tokens** and 7 **tokens** in the middle of the table.

Find the 6 cards with “only when” written on one side and “except when” written on the opposite side. These are the **When Cards**. You may want to play without these if it's your first time playing; in this case, simply remove them from play. Otherwise, refer to the **When Cards** section of these rules.

Shuffle the deck of **Riddle Cards** and deal 5 of these cards to each player, then place the deck face down on the table. If the deck ever runs out, shuffle the discards to make a new deck.

Gameplay

Start the first round by turning over the top card from the deck—this begins the riddle for the round. The shortest player takes the first turn on the first round, and play proceeds clockwise. On your turn, you may not pass, and must do one of two things:

1. You may play one card from your hand, adding your card to the riddle on the table. You will usually want to play a card such that you will have an answer to the riddle if someone challenges you to answer it, but don't tell anyone your answer unless you are challenged. If you can't think of an answer, you can pretend you have one and play a card anyway. Draw one card after you play one from your hand.
2. Instead of playing a card, you may challenge the player who played the last card (in fact, you may do this *even when it is not your turn*). See the next section for more info.

Challenging a player

At any point, any player may challenge the person who played the last card—the challenged player must then promptly give an answer to the riddle.

If the challenged player gives an answer, the other players who are not involved in the challenge then vote by simple majority on whether or not his answer is valid. If the answer is deemed to be valid, the challenged player takes a **token** from the middle of the table, and the player who challenged him takes a **token**. If the challenged player's answer is not valid, or if he has no answer, he takes a **token** and the player who challenged him takes a **token**. In the event of a tie in the votes, no tokens are taken.

After the challenge is settled, discard any cards that were played this round. If the challenged player took a **token**, he may discard any number of cards from his hand and draw from the deck until he has 5 **Riddle Cards** in his hand.

The player who was challenged starts the next round by turning over the top card from the deck, then taking his turn.

About answers to riddles

Answers may be concrete objects (i.e. “a cat”) or more abstract ideas (i.e. “a secret”), and may **not** be fictional characters, places, things, etc. Clever answers which fit the riddle cards metaphorically are encouraged. There is almost always more than one valid answer to a riddle.

Endgame

The game ends when all the tokens have been taken from the middle of the table. Each ☑ is worth 1 point and each ☒ is worth -1 point. The player with the most points wins the game. If there is a tie for first place, those players may settle the tie with one additional round, with the other players as the voters.

When Cards

If you choose to play with the **When Cards**, give one to each player at the beginning of the game and remove any extras from play.

On your turn, instead of simply adding one card to the riddle on the table, you may play your **When Card** in addition to another card from your hand to modify any of the cards currently on the table (you will still only draw one card at the end of your turn). For example, suppose that before your turn, the riddle looks like the one shown below:



You could play such that after your turn, the riddle now looks like the following:



This play modifies the condition of “I am pleasing or enjoyable.” When you play your **When Card**, you may use either side; “except when” or “only when.”

At the end of each round, rather than discarding the **When Cards**, give them back to the players who played them so that each player has one.

Sample round

Three people begin a game by each taking a hand of 5 cards plus a **When Card**. Player 1 is the shortest, so he starts by turning over the top card from the deck; the card reads, “I am not given as a gift.” Player 1 takes his turn by playing a card from his hand which reads, “I emit light.” Player 1 then draws a card.

Player 2 plays a card from his hand which says, “I cannot fit inside a house,” and then draws a card.

On his turn, player 3 plays a card which reads, “I come in many varieties.” Player 3 then draws a card.

Player 1 takes his next turn by playing his **When Card** as well as another card from his hand which says “I am dark.” He plays these two cards onto the “I emit light” card so that the riddle so far reads: **“I am not given as a gift, I emit light only when I am dark, I cannot fit inside a house, and I come in many varieties. What am I?”** Player 1 then draws a card. The game at this point looks like the illustration below.



Player 3 thinks this is totally bogus and challenges player 1 to answer the riddle. Player 1 responds by saying, “a cloud,” explaining how clouds create lightning, but only when they are dark thunderclouds. Player 2 is the only one not involved in the challenge—he votes that the answer is valid, so player 1 takes a ☑ **token** and player 3 takes a ☒ **token**.

Player 1 then takes back his **When Card** and the players discard the rest of the cards on the table, and player 1 starts the next round.

Adding a time limit

You may wish to add a time limit if players are taking a long time to choose a card to play. Decide on the maximum amount of time per turn before the game or before the start of a round. Each time a card is played, reset the timer. If time runs out, the current player **must** initiate a challenge.

The time limit also applies to any discussions of whether an answer is valid, after the challenged player has given an answer. If the time runs out during this period, the players must stop discussing and vote immediately.

“Press your luck” variant

For 1–4 players

In this variant game, players do not keep any cards in their hands. Players attempt to answer randomly generated riddles—the more cards that make up the riddle, the more points it’s worth.

To start, shuffle the deck of **Riddle Cards** and decide randomly who goes first. The **When Cards** are not used, nor are the **Tokens**.

On your turn, draw cards from the deck one at a time, placing them face-up as you do so. You may end your turn at any time; when you do, you must answer the riddle. If your answer is valid (as determined by vote, as in the regular rules for **RiddleCraft**), take the cards into your scorepile. Keep each riddle in your scorepile separate.

If your answer is not valid, the player with the least amount of points gets a chance to answer the riddle. If his answer is valid, he takes the riddle into his own scorepile. If more than one player is tied for having the least amount of points, nobody gets this opportunity. This does not affect the regular turn order.

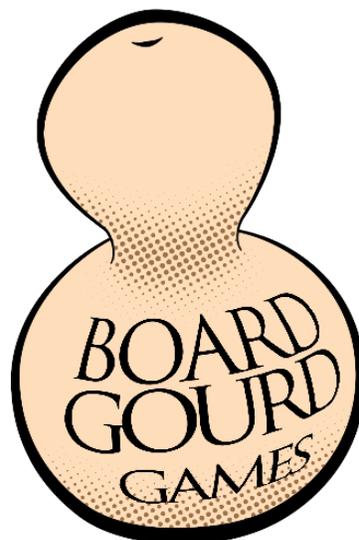
If neither player is able to answer the riddle, discard the cards.

The next player now takes his turn, and play proceeds clockwise.

The first player with 50 points wins. Each riddle in your scorepile is worth a number of points according to the following table:

<i>Length of riddle (cards)</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8+
<i>Score</i>	1	3	6	10	15	21	28	36

If you’re playing this game by yourself, keep track of how many turns it takes to get to 50 points, and try to beat that next time.



boardgourd.com