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Language



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rid·dle¹  (rĭd l)

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tr.v. **rid·dled, rid·dling, rid·dles**

1. To pierce with numerous holes; perforate: *riddle a target with bullets.*
2. To spread throughout: "*Election campaigns have always been riddled with demagoguery and worse*" (*New Republic*).
3. To put (gravel, for example) through a coarse sieve.

n.

A coarse sieve, as for gravel.

[Middle English *ridelen*, to sift, from *riddil*, sieve, from Old English *hriddel*; see **krei-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

rid dler *n.*

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rid·dle²  (rĭd l)

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n.

1. A question or statement requiring thought to answer or understand; a conundrum.
2. One that is perplexing; an enigma.

v. **rid·dled, rid·dling, rid·dles**

v.tr.

To solve or explain.

v.intr.

1. To propound or solve riddles.
2. To speak in riddles.

[Middle English *redels*, from Old English *rādel*s; see **ar-** [in the Appendix of Indo-European roots](#).]

rid dler *n.*

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Thousands of entries in the dictionary include etymologies that trace their origins back to reconstructed proto-languages. You can obtain more information about these forms in our online appendices:

[Indo-European Roots](#)

[Semitic Roots](#)

The Indo-European appendix covers nearly half of the Indo-European roots that have left their mark on English words. A more complete treatment of Indo-European roots and the English words derived from them is available in our [Dictionary of Indo-European Roots](#).

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