BBC Learning English
How to …
Be vague – Quiz

For each question, make a vague statement.

1: I left … things at the office last night.
   a: One of two
   b: One or two
   c: One and two

2: There are a couple of … in the speech we need to talk about.
   a: bits
   b: bit
   c: stuff

3: It’s … three o’clock now.
   a: approximately
   b: sort of
   c: about

4: There are … people on the bus.
   a: fifty-odd
   b: kind of fifty
   c: the odd fifty

5: I usually eat lunch at …
   a: one around
   b: one-odd
   c: oneish

6: She has … hair.
   a: about reddish
   b: red-odd
   c: sort of reddish
ANSWERS

1: I left … things at the office last night.
   a: One of two
      Wrong – this doesn’t make sense here.
   b: One or two
      Correct – ‘one or two’ means ‘a few’.
   c: One and two
      Wrong – this doesn’t make sense here.

2: There are a couple of … in the speech we need to talk about.
   a: bits
      Correct – ‘bit’ is a vague word for a part of something.
   b: bit
      Wrong – ‘a couple’ means that we need a plural here.
   c: stuff
      Wrong – ‘stuff’ is a non-count noun, so this should be ‘There is some stuff…’.

3: It’s … three o’clock now.
   a: approximately
      Wrong – this word is usually used in written, not spoken, English.
   b: sort of
      Wrong – ‘sort of’ is used with descriptions, not numbers.
   c: about
      Correct – we can use ‘about’ to give a vague idea of the time.

4: There are … people on the bus.
   a: fifty-odd
      Correct – there are around fifty people on the bus.
   b: kind of fifty
      Wrong – ‘kind of’ is used with descriptions, not numbers.
   c: the odd fifty
      Wrong – the sentence is plural. You can say ‘The odd one’ which means ‘occasionally’, e.g. ‘The odd weekend, I go fishing.’
5: I usually eat lunch at ... .
   a: one around
      *Wrong* – ‘around’ and ‘about’ come before the time.
   b: one-odd
      *Wrong* – we can’t use ‘-odd’ for talking about the time.
   c: oneish
      *Correct* – this is an informal way to talk about the time vaguely.

6: She has ... hair.
   a: about reddish
      *Wrong* – Use ‘about’ with numbers, not descriptions.
   b: red-odd
      *Wrong* – Use ‘odd’ with numbers, not descriptions.
   c: sort of reddish
      *Correct* – this is a natural way to describe a colour that is vaguely red.