

'Singlish Folk' Nursery Rhymes Number 1

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Baa Baa Black Sheep

Baa, baa, black sheep,
Have you any wool?
Yes sir, yes sir,
Three bags full.
One for the master,
One for the dame,
And one for the little boy
Who lives down the lane.

Tune: http://www.singlish.hu/uplFiles/29_29504.mp3

Bobby Shafto

Bobby Shafto's gone to sea,
Silver buckles on his knee;
He'll come back and marry me,
Bonny Bobby Shafto!
Bobby Shafto's bright and fair,
Combing down his yellow hair;
He's my love for evermair,
Bonny Bobby Shafto!

Tune: http://www.singlish.hu/uplFiles/29_29505.mp3

NOTE: Robert Shafto (sometimes spelt Shaftoe) was an 18th Century British Member of Parliament (MP) who was the likeliest subject of a famous North East English folk song and nursery rhyme.

Ding, Dong, Bell

Ding, Dong, Bell,
Pussy's in the Well.
Who put Her in?
Little Johnny Green (or Flynn).
Who pulled Her out?
Little Tommy Stout.
What a Naughty Boy was that,
To try to Drown poor Pussy Cat,
Who ne'er did Him any Harm,
But killed all the Mice in the Father's Barn.

Tune: http://www.singlish.hu/uplFiles/29_29507.mp3

NOTE: The origins of this nursery rhyme date back to the 16th Century and the era of Shakespeare who used the phrase "Ding Dong Bell" in several plays. The original lyrics of "Ding Dong Bell" actually ended with the cat being left to drown! These words were later modified and the cat was then saved by 'Little Tommy Stout' to encourage children to understand that it was unacceptable and cruel to harm any animal 'who ne'er did any harm'. The latter version taught morality at an early age. This is an early example of the current trend for making children's rhymes more 'politically correct'. (Wikipedia)

Georgie Porgie

Georgie Porgie, Puddin' and Pie,
Kissed the girls and made them cry,
When the boys came out to play
Georgie Porgie ran away.

No tune

NOTE: Georgie Porgie is a nursery rhyme which some people see as an early reference to sexual harassment. The lyrics to "Georgie Porgie" are thought to refer to the courtier George Villiers, 1st Duke of Buckingham (1592-1628). King James I took Villiers as his lover, though his most notorious affair was with Anne of Austria (1601-1666), who was Queen Consort of France. (Wikipedia)

Grand Old Duke of York

The grand old Duke of York,
He had ten thousand men.
He marched them up to the top of the hill
And he marched them down again.

And when they were up, they were up;
And when they were down, they were down.
But when they were only halfway up,
They were neither up nor down!

Tune: http://www.singlish.hu/uplFiles/29_29040.mp3

NOTE: Several explanations exist for this as there are several Dukes of York (second son of the King/Queen). Take a look at Wikipedia for some of them.

Hey diddle diddle

Hey diddle diddle,
The cat and the fiddle,
The cow jumped over the moon,
The little dog laughed to see such fun,
And the dish ran away with the spoon.

Tune: http://www.singlish.hu/uplFiles/29_29508.mp3

Hickory Dickory Dock

Hickory Dickory Dock
The mouse ran up the clock
The clock struck one
The mouse ran down
Hickory Dickory Dock

Tune: http://www.singlish.hu/uplFiles/29_29509.mp3

Hot cross buns

Hot cross buns,
Hot cross buns,
one ha' penny,
two ha' penny,
hot cross buns.
If you have no daughters,
give them to your sons,
one ha' penny,
two ha' penny,
Hot Cross Buns



Tune: http://www.singlish.hu/uplFiles/29_29510.mp3

NOTE: It developed out of a English street cry of bakers hawking their products.

Humpty Dumpty

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall.
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.
All the king's horses and all the king's men
Couldn't put Humpty together again.

Tune: http://www.singlish.hu/uplFiles/29_29511.mp3

NOTE: is a character in a nursery rhyme portrayed as an egg. Most English-speaking children are familiar with the rhyme:

It's raining, it's pouring

It's raining, it's pouring
The old man is snoring
He went to bed and he bumped his head
And he couldn't get up in the morning

Tune: http://www.singlish.hu/uplFiles/29_29513.mp3

Incy Wincy Spider

Incy wincy spider climbed up the water spout.
Down came the rain, and washed poor Incy out.
Out came the sunshine, and dried up all the rain
So Incy wincy spider climbed up the spout again.

Tune: http://www.singlish.hu/uplFiles/29_29512.mp3

Jack and Jill:

Jack and Jill went up the hill
To fetch a pail of water.
Jack fell down and broke his crown,
And Jill came tumbling after.

Up Jack got and down did trot
As fast as he could caper;
And went to bed to mend his head
With vinegar and brown paper

Tune: http://www.singlish.hu/uplFiles/29_29514.mp3

Little Bo Peep

Little Bo Peep has lost her sheep
And can't tell where to find them.
Leave them alone, And they'll come home,
Bringing their tails behind them

Tune: Same as Jack and Jill

London's Burning

London's burning (x2)
Fetch the engines (x2)
Fire fire (x2)
Pour on water (x2)

NOTE: A commonly heard song sung as a round in four parts. Does not appear under nursery rhymes normally

Tune: http://www.singlish.hu/uplFiles/29_29502.mp3

Mary had a little lamb

Mary had a little lamb,
Its fleece was white as snow;
And everywhere that Mary went,
The lamb was sure to go.

He followed her to school one day;
That was against the rule;
It made the children laugh and play;
To see a lamb at school.

And so the teacher turned it out,
But still it lingered near,
And waited patiently about
Till Mary did appear.

"Why does the lamb love Mary so?"
The eager children cry;
"Why, Mary loves the lamb, you know,"
The teacher did reply.

No tune

NOTE: The nursery rhyme was first published as an original poem by Sarah Hale on May 24, 1830, and was inspired by an actual incident. As a girl, Mary Sawyer (later Mrs. Mary Tyler) kept a pet lamb, which she took to school one day at the suggestion of her brother. A commotion naturally ensued.



Mary, Mary, Quite Contrary.

Mary Mary, quite contrary,
How does your garden grow?
With silver bells, and cockle shells,
And pretty maids all in a row

Tune?

NOTE: Possibly refers to Mary 1 of Scotland (Wikipedia) but other explanations are abundant.

Muffin Man

Do you know the Muffin Man?
The Muffin Man, the Muffin Man.
Do you know the Muffin Man?
He lives in Drury Lane.

Also:

Verse 1: Have you seen the muffin man etc.

Verse 2: Yes, I've seen the muffin man etc.

Tune: http://www.singlish.hu/uplFiles/29_29516.mp3

NOTE: The Muffin Man is a traditional nursery rhyme or children's song with English origins. Drury Lane is a street in London, also notable for its theatre. Victorian households had many of their fresh foods delivered; muffins would be delivered door-to-door by a muffin man. The "muffins" were the product known in much of the English-speaking world today as English muffins, not the cupcake-shaped variety.

Nuts in May

Here we go gathering nuts in May,
Nuts in May, nuts in May,
Here we go gathering nuts in May,
On a cold and frosty morning.

Who will you have for nuts in May,
Nuts in May, nuts in May,
Who will you have for nuts in May,
On a cold and frosty morning.

We'll have [name] for nuts in May,
Nuts in May, nuts in May,
We'll have [name] for nuts in May,
On a cold and frosty morning.

Who will you have to fetch him/her away,
Fetch him/her away, fetch him/her away,
Who will you have to fetch him/her away,
On a cold and frosty morning.

We'll have [name] to fetch him/her away,
Fetch him/her away, fetch him/her away,
We'll have [name] to fetch him/her away,
On a cold and frosty morning.

Tune: http://www.singlish.hu/uplFiles/29_29517.mp3

Old MacDonald

Old MacDonald had a farm
E I E I O
And on that farm he had a duck
E I E I O
With a 'quack quack' here
And a 'quack quack' there
Here a quack
There a quack
Everywhere a 'quack quack'
Old MacDonald had a farm
E I E I O

Other verses: dog, horse, cat, sheep, pig, turkey, goose etc.

Tune: http://www.singlish.hu/uplFiles/29_29065.mp3

NOTE: You can add a variation by calling it Old MacDonald had a zoo and include almost every animal – fish, snake, lion, tiger, hippopotamus etc.

One, Two, Three, Four, Five

One, two, three, four, five
Once I caught a fish alive
Six, seven, eight, nine, ten
Then I let it go again
Why did you let it go
Because it bit my finger so
Which finger did it bite
This little finger on the right

Tune: http://www.singlish.hu/uplFiles/29_29503.mp3

NOTE : Nothing more than a counting rhyme

Oranges and Lemons

"Oranges and lemons" say the Bells of St. Clement's
"You owe me five farthings" say the Bells of St. Martin's
"When will you pay me?" say the Bells of Old Bailey
"When I grow rich" say the Bells of Shoreditch
"When will that be?" say the Bells of Stepney
"I do not know" say the Great Bells of Bow
"Here comes a Candle to light you to Bed
Here comes a Chopper to Chop off your Head
Chip chop chip chop - the Last Man's Dead."

Tune: http://www.singlish.hu/uplFiles/29_29501.mp3

NOTE: This rhyme possibly dates back to the 16th or 17th century. It may well refer to the execution of Charles 1 (Wikipedia) though there are other explanations.

Peter Piper

Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers,
A peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked.
If Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers,
Where's the peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked?

or (how many pickled peppers did Peter Piper pick?)

No tune

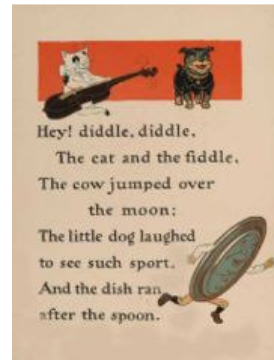
NOTE: Peter Piper is a Mother Goose nursery rhyme, well-known as a tongue twister.

Polly Put the Kettle On

Polly put the kettle on
Polly put the kettle on
Polly put the kettle on
We'll all have tea

Sukey take it off again
Sukey take it off again
Sukey take it off again
They've all gone away

Tune: http://www.singlish.hu/uplFiles/29_29519.mp3



Pop Goes the Weasel

Half a pound of tuppenny rice,
Half a pound of treacle.
That's the way the money goes,
Pop! goes the weasel.

All around the Mulberry Bush,
The monkey chased the weasel.
The monkey stopped to pull up his sock,
Pop! goes the weasel.

Half a pound of tuppenny rice,
Half a pound of treacle.
Mix it up and make it nice,
Pop! goes the weasel.

Up and down the city road,
In and out the Eagle,
That's the way the money goes,
Pop! goes the weasel.

For you may try to sew and sew,
But you'll never make anything regal,
That's the way the money goes,
Pop! goes the weasel.

Tune: http://www.singlish.hu/uplFiles/29_29520.mp3

NOTE: There are lots of explanations but I like this one: The "serious" Cockney uses "pop" to mean pawning or the redeeming of a pawned item, while the word "weasel" means "coat" (derived from "weasel and stoat")

Ring a Ring o'Roses

Ring a ring o'roses,
A pocketful of posies.
ah-tishoo, ah-tishoo.
We all fall down.

The King has sent his daughter,
To fetch a pail of water.
ah-tishoo, ah-tishoo.
We all fall down.

The bird up on the steeple,
Sits high above the people.
ah-tishoo, ah-tishoo.
We all fall down.

Tune: http://www.singlish.hu/uplFiles/29_29521.mp3

NOTE: A popular misinterpretation connects the poem with the Great Plague of London in 1665, or perhaps earlier outbreaks of bubonic plague in England; however, there is no evidence that Ring a Ring O'Roses and the plague were connected, until it was proposed in the 20th century. Regardless, this interpretation has entered into popular culture and is often used to reference the plague obliquely. This plague link seems to originate with the movement for finding origins of folk-songs, which was popular in the early 20th century.

Rock a Bye Baby

Rock a bye baby on the treetop,
When the wind blows the cradle will rock,
When the bough breaks the cradle will fall,
And down will come baby, cradle and all.

Tune: http://www.singlish.hu/uplFiles/29_29522.mp3

NOTE: There are lots of theories that the origin lies in America, Britain etc. It is certainly centuries old – at least 17th century.

Roses are red, dilly, dilly

Roses are red, dilly, dilly
Lavender's blue
If you will have me, dilly, dilly
I will have you.

Roses are red, dilly, dilly
Lavender's green
When I am King dilly dilly
You shall be Queen

Tune: http://www.singlish.hu/uplFiles/29_29506.mp3

NOTE: I can find no reference to the second verse which I have known since a child.

Row, row, row your boat

Row, row, row your boat,
Gently down the stream.
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,
Life is but a dream.

Tune: http://www.singlish.hu/uplFiles/29_29523.mp3

See Saw Margery Daw

See Saw Margery Daw
Johnny shall have a new master
He shall earn but a penny a day
Because he can't work any faster

Tune: http://www.singlish.hu/uplFiles/29_29524.mp3

Sing A Song Of Sixpence

Sing a song of sixpence,
a pocket full of rye.
Four and twenty blackbirds,
baked in a pie.
When the pie was opened,
the birds began to sing.
Now, wasn't that a dainty dish
to set before the king?

The king was in his counting house,
counting out his money.
The queen was in the parlour,
eating bread and honey.
The maid was in the garden,
hanging out the clothes,
When down came a blackbird
and pecked off her nose!

Tune: http://www.singlish.hu/uplFiles/29_29525.mp3

NOTE: Various options but not of significance. Certainly goes back to the 1700s



There was an old lady who swallowed a fly

There was an old lady who swallowed a fly.
I don't know why she swallowed that fly—
Perhaps she'll die.

There was an old lady who swallowed a spider,
That wiggled and jiggled and tickled inside her.
She swallowed the spider to catch the fly.
I don't know why she swallowed that fly—
Perhaps she'll die.

There was an old lady who swallowed a bird;
How absurd, to swallow a bird!
She swallowed the bird to catch the spider
That wiggled and jiggled and tickled inside her.
She swallowed the spider to catch the fly.
I don't know why she swallowed that fly—
Perhaps she'll die.

There was an old lady who swallowed a cat.
Imagine that, she swallowed a cat.
She swallowed the cat to catch the bird ...
She swallowed the bird to catch the spider
That wiggled and jiggled and tickled inside her.
She swallowed the spider to catch the fly.
I don't know why she swallowed that fly—
Perhaps she'll die.

There was an old lady who swallowed a dog.
What a hog! To swallow a dog!
She swallowed the dog to catch the cat ...
She swallowed the cat to catch the bird ...
She swallowed the bird to catch the spider
That wiggled and jiggled and tickled inside her.
She swallowed the spider to catch the fly.
I don't know why she swallowed that fly—
Perhaps she'll die.

There was an old lady who swallowed a cow.
I don't know how she swallowed a cow!
She swallowed the cow to catch the dog ...
She swallowed the dog to catch the cat ...
She swallowed the cat to catch the bird ...
She swallowed the bird to catch the spider...
That wiggled and jiggled and tickled inside her.
She swallowed the spider to catch the fly.
I don't know why she swallowed that fly—
Perhaps she'll die.

There was an old lady who swallowed a horse—
she's dead, of course.

Tune: http://www.singlish.hu/uplFiles/29_29518.mp3

This little piggy

This little piggy went to market,
This little piggy stayed home.
This little piggy had roast beef,
This little piggy had none.
And this little piggy went "Wee! Wee! Wee!"
All the way home.

No tune

NOTE: Counting fingers or toes (child gets a tickle at the end!!)

This old man

This old man, he played one;
He played knick-knack 'on my thumb' (or 'on a drum').
With a knick-knack, paddy whack,
Give a dog a bone;
This old man came rolling home.

This old man, he played two;
He played knick-knack on my shoe.
With a ...

This old man, he played three;
He played knick-knack 'on my knee' (or 'on my tree').
With a ...

This old man, he played four;
He played knick-knack on my door.
With a ...

This old man, he played five;
He played knick-knack 'on my hive'
With a ...

This old man, he played six;
He played knick-knack on my sticks.
With a ...

This old man, he played seven;
He played knick-knack 'up in heaven'
With a ...

This old man, he played eight;
He played knick-knack on my gate.
With a ...

This old man, he played nine;
He played knick-knack 'on my spine' (or 'in a line').
With a ...

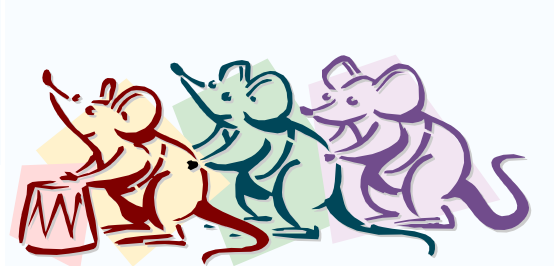
This old man, he played ten;
He played knick-knack now and then
With a ...

Tune: http://www.singlish.hu/uplFiles/29_29515.mp3

Three Blind Mice

Three blind mice. Three blind mice.
See how they run. See how they run.
They all ran after the farmer's wife
Who cut off their tails with a carving knife.
Did you ever see such a thing in your life
As three blind mice?

Tune: http://www.singlish.hu/uplFiles/29_29526.mp3



Three Little Pigs

There was an old sow who had three little pigs
Three little piggies had she
And the old sow always went 'oink, oink, oink'
While the piggies went 'wee, wee, wee'

One day one of these three little pigs
To the other two piggies said he
Why don't we try to go 'oink, oink, oink'
It's so childish to go 'wee, wee, wee'

The three little piggies grew skinny and thin
As skinny as they might be
But they still would try to go 'oink, oink, oink'
When they should have gone 'wee, wee, wee'

The three little piggies they upped and they died (ahhh!!!)
A terrible sight to see
So don't you try to go 'oink, oink, oink'
When you ought to go 'wee, wee, wee'

Tune: http://www.singlish.hu/uplFiles/29_29086.mp3

NOTE : You can have real fun with the sounds !!

Tom, Tom, the Piper's Son.

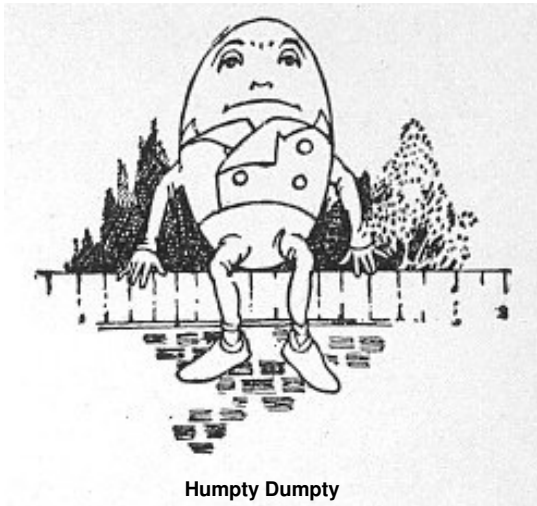
Tom, Tom, the piper's son,
He learned to play when he was young.
But all the tune that he could play
Was "Over the hills and far away."

NOTE: is a nursery rhyme. As it mentions a song from the eighteenth century (*Over the Hills and Far Away*), it is probably from the same period.

Alternative version:

Tom, Tom, the piper's son,
Stole a pig, and away did run.
The pig was eat and Tom was beat,
And Tom went roaring down the street

Tune: http://www.singlish.hu/uplFiles/29_29527.mp3



Humpty Dumpty

Twinkle, twinkle, little star

Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are!
Up above the world so high,
Like a diamond in the sky!
Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are!

When the blazing sun is gone,
When he nothing shines upon,
Then you show your little light,
Twinkle, twinkle, all the night.
Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are!

Then the traveler in the dark,
Thanks you for your tiny spark,
He wanted some more,
If you did not twinkle so.
Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are!

In the dark blue sky you keep,
And often through my curtains peep,
For you never shut your eye,
Till the sun is in the sky.
Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are!

As your bright and tiny spark,
Lights the traveller in the dark,—
Though I know not what you are,
Twinkle, twinkle, little star.
Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are!

Tune: http://www.singlish.hu/uplFiles/29_29528.mp3

NOTE: The repetition of the first two lines at the end of each verse is not in the original, but is needed to fit the usual melody. In the above everybody knows the first verse but not the rest! In 'Alice in Wonderland' the song appears in a different version:

Twinkle, twinkle, little bat,
How I wonder what you're at!
Up above the world so high,
Like a tea tray in the sky!
Twinkle, twinkle, little bat,
How I wonder what you're at!



Polly