

NURSERY RHYME CUE-TIPS

How delightful it is today to see little children playing and chanting "Ring around the roses, pocket full of posies; ashes, ashes, all fall down!" The cause for celebration in "Ring around the roses" was not always so harmless; it deals with one of the grim periods of English medical history. At the time of the Black Plague in England the first signs of a victim was a ring of red rash around the neck (roseola). As the disease progressed there was a horrible body stench which was combated by filling the pockets of the victim with sweet-smelling flowers. Eventually those so stricken would "all fall down" -- dead!

Children at the time of the Black Plague coped with the horrors they couldn't understand by playing this rhyming game. For some aesthetic reason the game and its rhyme lives on in the folklore of children just as the playful "logic" of other nursery rhymes survives in the language/play of children today.

Nursery rhymes are a vital part of the language/play of small children. Though hearing and repeating these jingles children develop a working knowledge of speech rhythms. They rapidly develop a rich (sometimes exotic!) vocabulary. Their memory span for longer language units is stretched. Their fantasy life is enhanced, and they are introduced to a life-long appreciation of poetry and song. Hearing-impaired children who are exposed to language for *direct communication only* are deprived of much of this important language/play. Small wonder that some popular nursery rhymes have been translated into sign language for Deaf children.

Of course, children who are being exposed to language via Cued Speech enjoy additional advantages:

1. All nursery rhymes can be cued, and
2. None of the aesthetic rhythm and rhyme of these lyrics is lost.

But there is a catch. Fluent cueing of even the simplest nursery rhyme takes skill. The novice cuer who is still struggling with simple phrases such as "Have a cookie!" may see this as a colossal waste of time and effort. Not true. Here's why:

1. Children always want to hear the same nursery rhymes over and over again. The initial investment will pay off many times over.
2. Learning to cue nursery rhymes will do wonders for the cueing parent or teacher who will soon be faced with far more complex sentences, involved explanations and stories. Nursery rhymes are excellent "boot training" for more fluent cueing.
3. Learning to cue nursery rhymes will give the parent, teacher, and clinician a whole new appreciation of this "first literature for children."
4. Because most nursery rhymes are stored in one's oral (rather than visual) memory bank, the process helps one to cue words as they are *said* rather than how they are *spelled*.

Some popular rhymes are included below, both to prime your memory and to check

your recall of handshapes, hand positions, and rules for combining phrases. If some pronunciations differ, always substitute *your own dialect preferences*. Those nursery rhymes which are easier to cue fluently are presented first. Practice each line slowly, chanting (or singing) as you go. Speed and natural rhythms will come with familiarity. Learn each rhyme thoroughly before proceeding to the next. When you get to the point where you begin adding your own favorite nursery rhymes to your repertoire, you'll know you are on the right track.

ONE, TWO -- BUCKLE MY SHOE

6-s/d, 4-s 5-c 4-s/d, 2-s/d 6-s 5-s, 5-t 6-c
One, two, buckle my shoe.

7-s, 3-m 5-c, 3-s 6-s/d 5-s 2-s/d 1-c, 3-s
Three, four, shut the door.

5-s, 5-t, 2-s 3-t, 2-s, 3-s 1-t, 2-s/d, 1-s 3-s, 5-t, 2-s, 3-s
Five, six, pick-up sticks.

3-c, 2-s/d, 4-c, 5-t, 5-s 6-c, 5-t 2-c, 5-s 3-s, 5-s, 3-c, 5-t, 5-s
Seven-eight, lay them straight.

4-s, 5-t, 4-s 5-c, 4-s 4-t, 7-s 5-t, 5-s 3-c, 4-s
Nine, ten, big fat hen.

LONDON BRIDGE

6-s/d, 4-s, 1-s, 5-t, 4-s 4-s, 3-t, 7-t, 2-s 5-c, 6-t, 8-s
London bridge-is falling

1-s, 5-t, 4-s
down,

5-c, 5-t, 8-s 1-s, 5-t, 4-s 5-c, 5-t, 8-s 1-s, 5-t, 4-s
Falling down, falling down.

6-s/d, 4-s, 1-s, 5-t, 4-s 4-s, 3-t, 7-t, 2-s 5-c, 6-t, 8-s
London bridge-is falling

1-s, 5-t, 4-s 5-s, 5-t 5-c, 3-s 6-c, 5-t, 1-t [or 1-m]
down, My fair lady!

JACK, BE NIMBLE

7-t, 2-s 4-m 4-t, 5-s, 4-s/d, 6-s 7-t, 2-s 4-m 2-s, 6-t, 2-s
Jack, be nimble, Jack, be quick,

7-t, 2-s 7-s/d, 5-s, 1-s, 5-s/f 2-m 2-s/d 2-t, 4-s, 1-s/d, 6-s
Jack jumped-over the candle -

3-s, 5-t, 2-s
stick.

LITTLE BO-PEEP

6-t, 5-s/d6-s 4-sif, 1-m, 1-s 3-t, 2-s 6-c, 3-s, 5-s 3-m
 Little Bo - Peep has lost her

6-m, 1-s 5-t, 4, s, 1-s 2-t, 4-s, 5-s 5-c, 6-s 4-c, 3-s 5-t
 sheep, and can't tell where to

5-s, 5-t, 4-s, 1-s 2-c, 4-s 6-m, 2-s 2-c, 5-s/d, 6-s/f, 4-s
 find them. Leave them-alone,

5-t, 4-s, 1-s 2-c, 5-t, 6-s 2-s/d, 5-s 3-s/f, 5-s, 6-t, 7-t, 8-s
 and they'll come home, Wagging

2-c, 3-s 5-c, 5-t, 6-s, 2-s 4-t, 3-s, 5-t, 4-s, 1-s 2-c, 5-s
 their tails behind them.

TWINKLE, TWINKLE, LITTLE STAR

5-s, 6-t, 8-s, 2-s/d, 6-s 5-s, 6-t, 8-s, 2-s/d, 6-s 6-t, 5-s/d, 6-s
 Twinkle, twinkle, little

3-s, 5-s/f, 3-s 3-s, 5-t 5-s, 5-t 6-s/d, 4-s, 1-m 4-s/d, 5-s
 star! How I wonder what

8-c 5-s/f, 3-s 5-s/d, 1-s/d, 4-s/d, 2-s 2-s/d 6-m, 6-s, 1-s
 you are! Up-above the world

3-s/f 3-s, 5-t 6-s, 5-t, 2-s/d 1-s, 5-t, 5-s/d, 4-s, 1-t, 4-s
 so high -- Like-a diamond-in

2-s/d 3-s, 2-s, 5-t
 the sky!

MARY HAD A LITTLE LAMB

5-c, 3-t 3-t, 1-s/d 6-t, 5-s/d, 6-s 6-t, 5-s 5-t, 5-s, 3-s
 Mary had-a little lamb, Its

5-s, 6-m, 3-s 6-s/d, 2-s 4-s, 5-t, 5-t, 2-s 3-s, 4-s/f
 fleece was white-as snow;

5-t, 4-s, 1-c, 2-s, 3-c, 4-c, 3-s 2-t, 5-s 5-c, 3-t 6-c, 4-s, 5-s
 And - everywhere that Mary went,

2-s/d 6-t, 5-s 6-s/d, 2-s 6-t, 3-s 5-c 7-s/f
 The lamb was sure to go.

THREE BLIND MICE

7-s, 3-m 4-s, 6-s, 5-t, 4-s, 1-s 5-s, 5-t, 3-s
 Three blind mice!

7-s, 3-m 4-s, 6-s, 5-t, 4-s, 1-s 5-s, 5-t, 3-s
 Three blind mice!

3-m 3-s, 5-t 2-c, 5-t 3-s/d, 4-s
 See how they run!

3-m 3-s,5-t 2-c,5-t 3-s/d,4-s
See how they run!

2-c,V-t 5-c,6-s 3-t,4-t,5-s,5-m 2-s/d 5-s/f,3-s,5-m2-s
They all ran - after the farmers

6-s,5-t,5-s 3-c 2-s/d,5-c,5-s 2-c,3-m 5-c,5-t,6-s,2-ss
wife, Who cut-off their tales

6-t,2-s/d 2-s/f-3-s,2-t,8-s 4-s,5-t,5-s 1-t,7-c 5-c,2-m
with - a carving knife. Did-you ever

3-m 3-s/d,8-s/d 3-s,5-t,5-t,4-s 8-m 6-s,5-t,5-t,2-s
see sucha sight-in yer life-as

7-s,3-m 4-s,6-s,5-t,4-s,1-s 5-s,5-t,3-s
three blind mice!

OLD MOTHER HUBBARD

5-s/f,6-s,1-s, 5-s/d,2-m 3-s/d,4-m,1-s 6-c,4-s,5-t 2-s/d
Old Mother Hubbard went-to the

2-s/d4-m,1-s 5-t 7-t,5-s 3-m 1-t,3-s 1-c,7-s/d
cupboard to get her poor dog-a

4-s/f,4-s 4-c,4-s 6-m 8-s/f,5-s 2-c,3-s 2-s/d
bone. When she got there the

2-s/d,4-m,1-s 6-s/d,2-s 4-c,3-s 5-t,4-s,1-s 3-s/f 2-s/d
cupboard was bare, -- and so the

1-t,3-s 1-c,7-s 3-t,1-s 4-s/d,4-s
poor dog had none!

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