

Nursery Rhyme Origins and Historical Context

Nursery Rhymes · Answer Key · 20 Questions

1. The rhyme 'Mary, Mary, Quite Contrary' is often historically associated with which specific Tudor monarch?

- A) Mary I of England**
- B) Elizabeth I
- C) Jane Grey
- D) Mary, Queen of Scots

2. In the original version of 'Three Blind Mice', published in 1609 by Thomas Ravenscroft, what is the fate of the mice?

- A) They escape the farmer
- B) They are blinded by a knife**
- C) They flee to the sea
- D) They are caught in a trap

3. The nursery rhyme 'Ring a Ring o' Roses' is frequently cited by folklorists as an inaccurate allusion to which historical event?

- A) The Norman Conquest
- B) The Great Fire of London
- C) The Great Plague of London**
- D) The English Civil War

4. What is the historical consensus regarding the identity of 'Humpty Dumpty' in the original 18th-century context before he became an anthropomorphic egg?

- A) A type of alcoholic drink
- B) A siege engine used during the English Civil War**
- C) A disgraced politician
- D) A specific type of riddle involving a falling object

5. 'London Bridge is Falling Down' is believed by some historians to refer to the 1014 destruction of the bridge by which Norse king?

- A) Harald Hardrada
- B) Olaf II of Norway**
- C) Sweyn Forkbeard
- D) Cnut the Great

6. Which 17th-century historical figure is 'Little Jack Horner' frequently theorized to represent in relation to the Dissolution of the Monasteries?

A) Thomas Cromwell

B) Thomas Horner

C) Cardinal Wolsey

D) Henry VIII

7. The rhyme 'Georgie Porgie' is often speculated to be a satirical take on the life of which 18th-century British monarch?

A) George I

B) George II

C) George III

D) George IV

8. 'Baa, Baa, Black Sheep' is thought by some to be a critique of which 13th-century economic policy?

A) The Great Famine

B) The medieval wool tax

C) The Crusades

D) The Magna Carta

9. In the rhyme 'Sing a Song of Sixpence', what does the 'four and twenty blackbirds' likely represent in allegorical interpretations?

A) The hours in a day

B) The books of the New Testament

C) The king's council members

D) The jurors in a court

10. The line 'Ten o'clock scholar' from the rhyme 'Curly Locks' implies which social behavior in 18th-century educational contexts?

A) Diligence and early rising

B) Laziness and tardiness

C) Scholarly aptitude

D) Financial poverty

11. 'Lavender's Blue', a rhyme dating back to the 17th century, was famously included in a collection published by whom?

A) William Shakespeare

B) John Locke

C) James Orchard Halliwell

D) Charles Perrault

12. The rhyme 'Yankee Doodle' was originally sung by British troops during the French and Indian War to mock whom?

- A) The French settlers
- B) The Dutch colonists
- C) The disorganized American colonial militia**
- D) The Canadian trappers

13. 'Ladybird, Ladybird, Fly Away Home' is thought to be a reference to which religious event in English history?

- A) The Reformation and the persecution of Catholics**
- B) The Gunpowder Plot
- C) The Restoration of the Monarchy
- D) The Glorious Revolution

14. Which nursery rhyme is specifically noted in historical records for being a riddle where the answer is 'a candle'?

- A) Little Miss Muffet
- B) Little Jack Horner
- C) Little Nancy Etticoat**
- D) Little Bo Peep

15. The 'Old Woman who lived in a shoe' is often interpreted as an allegory for which royal figure and their large family?

- A) Queen Anne**
- B) Queen Victoria
- C) Mary II
- D) Catherine of Aragon

16. 'Hey Diddle Diddle' contains imagery of a cow jumping over the moon; which celestial constellation is sometimes linked to this rhyme?

- A) Taurus**
- B) Ursa Major
- C) Orion
- D) Cassiopeia

17. What does the 'muffin man' in the nursery rhyme refer to in Victorian-era Drury Lane?

- A) A literal bread seller**
- B) A street entertainer
- C) A professional spy
- D) A chimney sweep

18. 'Jack and Jill' is theorized by some to represent the botched execution of which French monarchs?

A) Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette

B) Louis XII and Anne of Brittany

C) Henry II and Catherine de' Medici

D) Charles VII and Joan of Arc

19. 'Mary had a Little Lamb' was written by Sarah Josepha Hale, who is also known for campaigning for which American holiday?

A) Independence Day

B) Thanksgiving

C) Memorial Day

D) Labor Day

20. The term 'mother goose' first appeared in English literature in a 1697 collection by whom?

A) Charles Perrault

B) Jean de La Fontaine

C) Brothers Grimm

D) Hans Christian Andersen