

Nursery Rhyme Origins and Historical Context

Nursery Rhymes · Practice Test · 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