

Historical Origins of Nursery Rhymes

History Of Nursery Rhymes · Practice Test · 15 Questions

1. Which historical figure is most commonly associated with the theory that 'Mary, Mary, Quite Contrary' refers to the religious policies of Queen Mary I?

- A) Elizabeth I
- B) Mary Tudor
- C) Mary Queen of Scots
- D) Anne Boleyn

2. The rhyme 'Ring a Ring o' Roses' is frequently, though controversially, linked to which historical event in London?

- A) The Great Fire of 1666
- B) The Peasants' Revolt
- C) The Great Plague of 1665
- D) The Norman Conquest

3. 'Humpty Dumpty' appeared in a 17th-century context not as an egg, but as what type of mechanism?

- A) A siege engine
- B) A type of ale
- C) A parliamentary decree
- D) A maritime compass

4. The lyrics 'Three Blind Mice' were first published in 1609 by Thomas Ravenscroft; what do they supposedly describe regarding Queen Mary I?

- A) The blinding of peasant protesters
- B) The execution of three Anglican bishops
- C) The suppression of Catholic monasteries
- D) The loss of three naval ships

5. 'London Bridge is Falling Down' is historically believed to reference the 1014 attack by which leader?

- A) William the Conqueror
- B) King Canute
- C) Olaf II of Norway
- D) Harald Hardrada

6. The rhyme 'Georgie Porgie' is often analyzed by historians as a satirical commentary on which English monarch?

- A) George I
- B) George II
- C) George III
- D) George IV

7. 'Jack and Jill' is theorized by some etymologists to be a coded reference to the execution of which French figures?

- A) Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette
- B) Robespierre and Danton
- C) Napoleon and Josephine
- D) Marat and Charlotte Corday

8. 'Little Jack Horner' is traditionally linked to Thomas Horner, a steward to the Abbot of Glastonbury, during which historical process?

- A) The Hundred Years' War
- B) The Dissolution of the Monasteries
- C) The English Civil War
- D) The Glorious Revolution

9. The rhyme 'Sing a Song of Sixpence' has been interpreted by some as a metaphor for what specific historical activity?

- A) The printing of the King James Bible
- B) The levying of taxes by the Tudors
- C) The discovery of the New World
- D) The trade of spices with the East

10. 'Baa, Baa, Black Sheep' is often linked to the medieval taxation of which commodity in England?

- A) Coal
- B) Wool
- C) Grain
- D) Iron

11. The character 'Yankee Doodle' was originally used by British troops during the American Revolutionary War to mock whom?

- A) George Washington
- B) The Continental Army
- C) The French allies
- D) The British loyalists

12. 'Ladybird, Ladybird' is frequently interpreted as a reference to the persecution of which group during the Reformation?

- A) Catholics
- B) Puritans
- C) Quakers
- D) Huguenots

13. 'Who Killed Cock Robin' is sometimes historically linked to the fall of which political ministry in the 18th century?

- A) The Walpole Ministry
- B) The Pitt Ministry
- C) The North Ministry
- D) The Grenville Ministry

14. 'Old Mother Hubbard' was written by Sarah Catherine Martin; historians suggest the 'Hubbard' may be a caricature of whom?

- A) Cardinal Wolsey
- B) Oliver Cromwell
- C) Elizabeth I
- D) George III

15. 'Ten Little Indians' (originally 'Ten Little Niggers') was written in 1868 by Septimus Winner; what was its original context?

- A) A political protest
- B) A minstrel show song
- C) A children's lullaby
- D) A celebratory anthem