

# **THE RHYME AND STORY BOOK**

**(Teacher's Guide)**

**THE ENGLISH FOR FUN PROJECT**

**(To be distributed along with the audio recordings of each story and rhyme,  
everything free of charge)**

## Introduction

English For Fun is a project that aims to give very young children a chance to acquire the English Language through their pre-primary schooling, or through self-help English Language Acquisition Centers. It's driven by the belief that if one grows fond of a language very early in life, the relationship with it when one learns it formally as a second language will be amicable. Years of teaching basic English to adults in the Sri Lankan university system has shown me that a more cordial relationship with the English language is needed by the learners of it who are not exposed to it naturally during their childhood in this country. Therefore, the English for Fun project is a way of attempting to make English be a part of any Sri Lankan child's life, given in a way they will remember those moments with love and memories of fun, and not strict instruction.

This happens at these three levels with regard to this syllabus/book:

1. Exposure to story books in English:

(This is based on the belief that the nurseries and ELACs will have some good picture story books in the English language. Even if they don't, at least this book will be available, in hard or digital form.)

Even if the children can't read them or the adult facilitator cannot read English, just letting them have a chance of touching/looking at them, turning the pages and seeing English letters, enjoying the pictures in them, will give them a sense of familiarity with the wonder and beauty of storybooks.

2. Story-telling:

The children or the adult with them can play the recorded fairy tales that accompany the words found in this book. This will give them a chance to hear the language, even as they look at the words on the page. The level may be too high for some – but that shouldn't be a problem if the story is also related to them in their mother tongue. In all instances this book is used, there will be Sinhala and Tamil translations also made available for the adult who is with the child. She or he can read out the story, or narrate it in their own words, in the child's native tongue before or after it is played in English, in case the adult cannot read English. In some cases, the child her/himself will be able to read the translation.

3. Nursery Rhymes and Songs:

The songs should be enjoyed simply for the music and the actions that accompany them. The idea is for the children to have fun.

Just enjoying these stories and rhymes alone would be enough. However, given that pre-primary education also has space for some instruction, I have built some basic vocabulary lessons and other activities based on this material. The facilitator (who could be a teacher or an adult who accompanies the child to an ELAC center) could help with these, according to the level he or she is capable of. Even with nothing but enjoyment, the child will still benefit.

### Stories

Some of the most pleasant early memories of many adults are of having someone who read to them in childhood. Most children might have this in their native tongue. The idea is to do the same in English. If it's done in a classroom, the facilitator can reproduce a home-like effect by keeping the children around her/him in a half circle, telling the story in the native tongue and then playing the CD. The less "classroom-like" the arrangement – which is the teacher in front of the class and the children on desks before him/her - the better.

Apart from the language acquisition angle, there is another value that stories like fables and fairy tales have: they can open up worlds of enchantment and magic for children. That, in turn, will activate or strengthen their powers of imagination, which is one of the most wonderful things that can happen to a human being, making them more creative as people.

### Songs

The actions that go with the rhymes are specified here. Getting children physically involved, either through clapping, stamping their feet, swinging their bodies to rhythm will make them 'feel' the song, the rhythm and the music more. It will also make it easier for them to memorize the easy lyrics and sing along. Please let them sing as loud as they want. The musicality is not the point here – but the enjoyment of the song.

### The ways of building activities on the stories and rhymes

In *Tell it Again! The New Storytelling Handbook for Primary Teachers*, Gail Ellis and Jean Brewster say that the following can be taught in a language syllabus based on storytelling: functions (such as greetings)/structures (basic grammar)/vocabulary/pronunciation/skills to be developed (eg. logical thinking)/cognitive skills (learning to learn)/cultural and citizenship awareness/awareness of other curricular subjects.

They have shown various ways in which we can use stories to improve the development of children. Adapting those to a younger age level than the primary school students, we can say that these can be used to

- to make cross curricular links (to talk about other subjects like geography and science/do art and craft based on them/link it with drama (for eg. role play) and music/physical activity (eg. moving like a particular animal)
- to teach them to learn: cognitive development activities (through comparing, matching/classifying/predicting, guessing, inferring/sequencing /hypothesizing, problem-solving/memorizing, memory training/ activating previous content knowledge.)
- Conceptual reinforcement (through teaching them about colours/shapes, size, quantity/time, space (spatial context)/cause and effect/problems and solutions.)

- Citizenship training (cultural similarities and difference/morality and moral values/helping people/friendship/gender/cultural stereotyping/ecology: conservation of energy/animals/extinction.)

The activities that I have devised on the stories and rhymes were done keeping these frameworks in mind. I have also kept in mind the importance of vocabulary acquisition at every step. Starting with the alphabet, there are small steps that children can take depending on what the facilitator is capable of giving.

Since children like listening to the same story or rhyme many times, you can repeat these as you wish, changing the activities associated with them each time. The rhymes can be played over and over again till they learn the words themselves and sing along. The activities built on the stories will make use of the illustrations as well as the story.

This syllabus is designed to be put to use in nursery classes, as well as English Language Acquisition Centers (ELACs), where even one adult facilitator can expose their child/children to this language. The student book as well as the Teacher's Guide is available in Sinhala and Tamil as well, so that the facilitator, even without knowing English, can help a child acquire it, as the whole syllabus/book is available as audio tracks. The nursery project is something I had been thinking of for a long time and is now being put to use in the Northern Province through the interest of Dhanya Ratnavale, the Coordinating Secretary of the Governor's Secretariat there. The idea of ELACs came about through a conversation I had with my actress friend Thusitha Jayasundera who voiced the first batch of stories here, when we discussed the possibility of having an easily accessible and cost-free place for any child to access good children's books in English. I was already aware of the very good library system in Sri Lanka and through the efforts of Dr. Nayana Wijayasundara, librarian of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura, could access it easily. The involvement of the National Library Services Board, where there were people very open to this idea of making the English language accessible to as many children as possible here, meant that this project could go island-wide.

How successfully this project will bear fruit is up to you. I hope you have fun with teaching or being a facilitator-adult in this. Look through this guide and pick what you can do – and please add more activities you can think of to this. I have given the barest of instructions; make your own vocabulary lists according to the level of your students, and adapt the activities to suit your context. Your own creativity will be invaluable in making this syllabus/book a good memory in the lives of the children exposed to it.

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Ellis, Gail, and Jean Brewster. *Tell it Again: The New Storytelling Handbook for Primary Teachers*. Essex: Pearson Education Ltd. 2002 [1991]

## Nursery Rhymes and Songs

- For all twenty-three of these rhymes and songs, teach them how to clap to the rhythm and move their bodies to the music.
- Use the illustrations too, to teach them shapes and colour. Some have charts that show you other words that come in that category. Please use them to improve the vocabulary of the students.

### 1. The Alphabet Song

- Sing out and enjoy the music.
- After a while point to the letters that they sing – once in capital and once in simple.
- Later, point to any letter and get the child/children to shout out its name.

### 2. I'm a Little Teapot

- Movements:
  - Show short and stout with your hands.
  - For handle put one arm on the hip. For spout, show a spout with the other arm.
  - Bend down to the side of the spout like a teapot for “Pour me out”.
- Vocabulary
  - Words associated with tea – tea cup, saucer, teapot, strainer, tea leaves, jug, kettle, water, milk, sugar
- General Knowledge
  - Teach them the process of making tea.
- Drama:
  - They can play act making tea – with pretend things.
  - They can serve tea to visitors.

### 3. Pat-a- Cake, Pat-a-Cake

- Movements
  - For the first two lines, stand in front of another child and clap your palms together once and then the palm of the child in front, moving the arm diagonally.
  - Then act out patting, then pricking the cake, and then drawing a B over it
  - And then mime putting the cake in the oven.

- Vocabulary
  - Food items that can be made with flour – bread, cake, chapati, dosa, buns
  - Objects in the kitchen – hearth, gas cooker, coconut scraper, refrigerator (fridge), oven.
  - Professions – baker, postman, policeman, doctor, teacher, pilot, nurse etc.

#### **4. Are You Sleeping?**

- Movements  
Show the movements of ringing a bell in the last line.
- Vocabulary – verbs - sleep, sit, stand etc.
- Drama
  - Act as if you are getting up in the morning.
  - Act as if you are going to sleep in the night
  - Act as if you are trying to wake someone up.

#### **5. Row Row Row Your Boat**

- Movements
  - Sit facing another child and hold each other's hands and rock forwards and backwards to the rhythm.
- Vocabulary  
What are the modes of transport on water? Boat, sail boat, motor boat, ship, raft  
What travels on earth? Train, car, bicycle, lorry, bus, truck, motorbike  
What travels in the air? Airplane

#### **6. Baa Baa Black Sheep**

- Sing this out.
- Clap to the rhythm
- Movements:
  - Show three on your fingers
  - Nod at 'Yes, sir, yes sir'.
- Learn how to count – 1 – 10 in English.
- Learn some colours – black and white
- General Knowledge: Identify some colors in animals.
  - What colours do cows have?
  - Sheep?
  - Ants/crows/stalks/parrots?

## **7. Twinkle Twinkle Little Star**

- Movements: Do these actions with each line:
  - Show with your fingers what it is to twinkle
  - Place a finger under your chin to show you are thinking.
  - Point to the sky when you say up above
  - Show a diamond shape with your fingers at the last line
- Activity to learn directions
  - Point above
  - Point below
  - Point to the left/right/at the sky/at trees (and whatever you can see there)

## **8. Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes**

- Movement: The children can touch the parts of the body used in this rhyme as they sing the song.

## **9. Hey Diddle Diddle**

- Teach vocabulary related to
  - Animals – cats, cow, dog
  - Crockery – spoon, dish, fork, plate
  - Instruments – fiddle, drum, piano
  - Things in the sky – moon, stars, clouds
- Drama
  - Pretend to be the dish and the spoon and run away.
  - Pretend to be the cow and jump over the moon
  - Laugh like the dog.

## **10. Hickory Dickory Dock**

- Movement: This rhyme also has actions
  - Roll your arms over one another and clap at “dock”
  - Raise your arms at ‘ran up the clock’ – as if the fingers are walking
  - After ‘The clock struck one’ – clap once (and keep adding claps at two three four etc.)
  - At ‘down’ bring your hands down
  - Repeat first action for the last line of Hickory Dickory Dock

- Vocabulary –
  - Teach them animal names like the ones that come in the rhyme
  - Teach them numbers from 1 - 5
- General Knowledge: Reading the time -
  - They will get used to reading the clock at hourly intervals if you can draw the clock face on the board and show what the hours they shout out in the rhyme look like

## **11.Incy Wincy Spider**

- Movements:
  - For the first line walk your fingers upon each other, starting with the thumb on the forefinger of the other hand and vice versa, raising your arms up as you go.
  - For 'Down came the rain', bring your arms down fast
  - For 'Out came the sun', spread your arms in a wide circle
  - And then repeat the first action again
- Vocabulary – names of insects

## **12.Bingo Was His Name-o**

- Rhythmic Awareness:
  - A letter from the word BINGO is taken away at every verse, and is replaced with a clap. Get the students to do this. This gives them a good sense of rhythm and timing.
- Get them to shout out the letters that make BINGO as loud as they can.

## **13.Mary had a Little Lamb**

- Vocabulary – farm animals
- Drama:
  - Act this rhyme out. Pretend to be Mary and the lamb. Some children can be the school kids laughing and talking around lamb. One child can be the teacher, trying to get the lamb out of school.

## **14.One, Two, Buckle My Shoe**

- Movements:



Act out the buckling shoes, shutting the door, picking up sticks and laying them straight.

- Vocabulary – Count from 1 to 10
- Play:  
Draw a grid with the numbers on the floor, and jump to the numbers as you sing this rhyme.

1	2
3	4
5	6
7	8
9	10

### **15. My Father Has a Garden**

- This song may be difficult to sing along to – but they can enjoy listening to it.
- Vocabulary
  - Names of flowers
  - The animals that live in or use trees – birds, bees, squirrels
- Classification -
  - Who are the animals that live in trees? In water? Under the earth? On the earth?

### **16. If You are Happy and You Know It**

- Movements:
  - The children have to do the action when they see the words after each line – clap, stomp and shout hurray.
- Activity –
  - You can add different verbs to the actions in this rhyme - wave your hand/ swing your arms/shake your legs/ turn around etc.
- Vocabulary – verbs of action

### **17. Hush a Bye Baby**

- Once you know the words, sing this softly like a lullaby
- Movements - Swing a baby to sleep in your arms as you sing.

- General Knowledge – learning about trees
  - What are the strong tall trees, on which you can build swings?
  - What are small trees, whose branches are not that strong?

## **18. Wheels on the Bus**

- Movements
 

Each of these verses have an action that you can do while you sing that verse.

  - 1) Turn your arms over one another
  - 2) Pretend you are bouncing on a seat going up and down
  - 3) Pretend to press a horn and say ‘beep, beep, beep’
  - 4) Wave our hands with palms outwards like a wiper
  - 5) Put your fingers together and then open them to show twinkling lights
  - 6) Pretend to cry like babies
  - 7) Put your finger on your lips and say ‘Shhhh’

## **19. Old McDonald Had a Farm**

- When the song is sung, encourage the children to make the sounds the animals make as realistically as they can.
- Vocabulary – farm animals
- Drama
  - Make animal sounds – cows – moo/sheep – baa/ hens – cluck.
  - What sounds do they make according to your culture?

## **20. The Ants Go Marching One by One**

- Movements: This can be sung with the following actions:
  - When it says one by one, the children stand in a line.  
At two by two, they stand two together.  
At three by three, three children stand together
  - and so on, all the way up to 10.
  - All the while they go marching up and down the class.
- Tell them to shout out the ‘Boom boom boom’.

- Vocabulary – Counting from numbers 1- 10.
- Play (to learn verbs of movement)
  - Shout ‘march’ or ‘run’ or ‘walk’ or ‘crawl’ and get the children to show those ways of movement.

## **21.Hush Little Baby**

- Movements:
  - Sway your body to the rhythm
  - Pretend to rock a baby to sleep in your arms
- Vocabulary
  - Learn the nouns that come in the song – mockingbird/diamond ring/looking glass/billy goat/ cart and bull/ dog/ horse and cart  
Which of these can you see most often in the environment around you?

## **22.I Can Sing a Rainbow Too**

- Vocabulary – Learn the colours of the rainbow
- Show the relevant colours while you sing. Have color strips ready or show the colours in the picture found in the book.
- General knowledge
  - Teach the children what eyes etc. do.  
What do eyes do? - See  
What do ears do? – Hear  
What do noses do? Smell  
What do mouths do – Taste
- Igniting imagination;
  - Ask the children why, in this song, the rainbow is ‘sung’ and not ‘seen’. (The answer can be something like – because the colours of the rainbow are sung out. Any creative answer will be alright here.)

## **23.Home on the Range**

- Vocabulary – learn the names of the animals here – buffalo, antelope etc.
- General knowledge
  - Geographical locations – beach, coast, mountain, valley, plains

# Aesop's Fables

## 1. The Country Mouse and the Town Mouse

- Vocabulary – verbs of action
  - Jump, run, hide, chase, shout, walk
- Game - Simon Says

Shout out a verb of action with the words “Simon says” or without that. The children should do it when they hear the verb with “Simon says” and not do it when only the verb is said. So the facilitator should mix the way the verb is shouted out to make it exciting. If they do the action when the phrase ‘Simon says’ is not there, the child is ‘out’. The one/ones who get left at the end is the winner.
- General Knowledge
  - Where can houses be located be located? Town, country, beach, city, mountains
  - In what types of buildings can people make homes? Huts, mansions, castles, flats, apartments. IF possible show pictures of these different types of homes.
- Drama
  - Act out the scene where the mice run from the cat and then is chased by a maid too.
  - Act out the mice eating their fill on the table.
  - Act out how country mouse is shivering in fright when the cat is yowling outside the hole in the night

## 2. The Oak and the Reed

- Vocabulary - Adjectives – Strong, weak, angry, scornful, sad, proud.
- Drama
  - Teach children how to show these emotions on their faces.
  - Shout out an adjective “Be angry”, “Be proud” “Be sad” and get them to show it on their faces and in their posture. -

## 3. Goldilocks and the Three Bears

- Classification game –

- Pick stones/leaves/flowers of different sizes and tell them to group them according to the rough sizes of ‘small, medium and big’.
- Say “Show me a small/medium sized/big stone/leaf/flower” – and get them to hold it up. (Of course, these sizes are relative. So whatever you can find, group accordingly)
- Vocabulary –
  - Colour - gold, black, brown, blue, red
    - Identify the colours in the pictures that come in the story.
    - Have little strips of colour (or colour pencils) and tell them the name of the colour in English. Then hold it up and let them shout the name out.
  - Furniture - chair, table, bed,
    - Name the furniture in the pictures
  - Crockery - bowl, cup, plate, spoon
- Drama –
  - Act out the three bears seeing their bowls, seeing their chairs, and seeing their beds.
  - Act out Goldilocks seeing the bears, getting frightened, and running away.
- Learning language functions –
  - Greetings –
    - Hello, how are you?
    - Welcome.
  - Requests to enter some place
    - May I come in?
  - Giving permission to enter some place
    - Please come in.
    - You may enter (formal)
  - Apologizing
    - I am sorry.
    - Sorry.
    - Please forgive me.
  - Being grateful for something

Thank you  
Thank you very much.  
(The answer to thank you is also 'Welcome'. Or 'You are welcome'.

- Leaving  
Good bye.

- Drama  
Role play people in these situations. Act this out. Knock on a door. Open a door. Invite someone in. Ask permission to come in.

#### **4. Juno and the Peacock**

- Vocabulary –
  - Animals – Peacock, eagle etc.
  - Adjectives – wide, magnificent, pretty, beautiful, special
- Comparison of adjectives
  - Teach them what pretty, prettier, prettiest means or beautiful, more beautiful, most beautiful
  - Show with your hands – wide, wider, widest/tall, taller, tallest/short, shorter, shortest
- Drama
  - Fly like an eagle
  - Strut like a peacock
  - Admire someone

#### **5. The Ants and the Grasshopper**

- Vocabulary –
  - Fruits and vegetables
  - Names of insects
  - Names of music instruments
- Drama
  - Walk in line like the ants
  - Walk pretending to carry something heavy
  - Laze around like the grasshopper
  - Shiver in the cold
  - Dance and sing like the grasshopper

- Teach Opposites
  - Cold – warm
  - Hardworking – lazy
  - Intelligent – stupid
  - Slow – fast
- Teach adverbs
  - Call out these instructions to the children-

Walk fast  
Walk slowly  
Sing loud  
Sing softly

## **6. The Wind and the Sun**

- Vocabulary – Colours
  - What are the colours in the picture?
- Comparison of adjectives –
  - Just teach them what tight, tighter, tightest mean (no need to tell what they are called positive, comparative and superlative). Also  
Strong, stronger, strongest  
Powerful, more powerful, most powerful
  - Activity  
Tell the children to run fast, then faster  
Pretend to hold a hat tight and then tighter
- Drama –
  - Pretend to be the wind. Run around as if you are blowing down everything in sight.
  - Act like the man walking against the wind.

## **7. Look Before You Leap**

- Vocabulary
  - Seasons in the tropics: rainy season, monsoon, drought.
- Drama –

- Swim like fish. Hop like frogs. Glide like swans. Waddle like ducks.
- General knowledge
  - Discuss the following –  
What are the creatures that exist in ponds? Who can stay only in water? Who can stay on earth? Who can live in both water and land?

## **8. The Boy Who Cried Wolf**

- Vocabulary
  - Animals: sheep, wolf, cows, horse, lamb, goat
- Classification – of animals
  - Predators/Prey
  - Carnivores – animals who eat meat only/ Herbivores – animals who eat only plant-based food/ omnivores - those who eat meat and leafy things
  - Farm animals/ wild animals
- Drama –
  - Run down the mountain like the boy did shouting ‘Wolf!’ or ‘Help!’
  - Act like the wolf scaring the sheep and the sheep running around scared.
  - Run up the mountain like the villagers, looking worried.