

Contents and information for Teachers

Nursery Rhymes



Nursery Rhymes artefact collection

IMPORTANT This collection is designed to be used in conjunction with our updated Nursery Rhymes CD resource pack. The artefacts do not necessarily relate to the words of the rhyme. More often it is the illustrations for the rhymes that open up opportunities to explore aspects of life in the past that are very different from today.

Polly put the kettle on



Kettle and knitted pot holder

The second verse of this rhyme talks of 'taking the kettle off', today we usually talk of 'switching the kettle off'. This opens up the whole scenario of life before electricity.

Where is the switch on this kettle? Just how did Polly heat her kettle?



Polly's apron and mob cap



You can use the clothing to go into role as Polly and explain how she heated her kettle. They also match the illustration for the rhyme that is included in our CD Resource pack.

The following artefacts can be used to explore changes in everyday items associated with making tea, such as packaging and teaspoons etc. Children could role play making tea the way Polly would have. How does tea making differ today from in the past? Most children will see tea being made by dropping a tea bag into a mug and pouring hot water over it. But, not so long ago, teapots, tea caddies, tea cups and saucers, strainers and teaspoons would all have featured.

Teapot, Tea Canister and caddy spoon, with tea! (canister is a reproduction)



Some children may never have seen tea made in a teapot and more will be unaware tea ever came/ comes in any form other than the ubiquitous tea bags. The tin is a reproduction of the type of packaging in which loose tea would have been bought in the past. Caddy spoons were used to measure the tea into the tea pot – as a general rule of thumb, one spoon per person plus one for the pot.

Assorted tea spoons, strainer and infuser



Why would you need to strain tea? How was the tea infuser used? Do children's parents use tea spoons in their tea? (Many probably won't since far fewer people put sugar in their tea now than in the past.)

Jack and Jill

Can pupils guess what nursery rhyme character these items represent?



Wooden pail

You can use this item to continue the idea that even the most basic household tasks involved a lot of work in the past. For example, where did the water for Polly's kettle come from? Was it from a tap or was getting water more complicated? Whilst it might not have been up the hill to the well, it could have easily been down the road to the nearest pump!



Vinegar bottle and brown paper 'cap'



Today we would use a plaster and antiseptic to deal with bumps and scrapes, but in the past all sorts of strange remedies were used. Sadly even minor injuries could become life threatening owing to the lack of antibiotics etc. we use today.

Wee Willie Winkie

Again you can see if children can guess what nursery rhyme character is represented by the collection of objects we include here.



Nightgown and cap



Old fashioned alarm clock, showing just past 8 o'clock

This clock closely matches one that is shown in one of the three Wee Willie Winkie illustrations that are included in our Nursery Rhymes CD Resource pack.



The following lighting artefacts match items in the illustrations included in our resource pack and can be used to initiate a discussion of how difficult life would be without electric lights. In the past the only light sources gave poor light and posed a fire risk, today we associate such items as candles and lanterns with celebrations and maybe summer barbecues, but how difficult would life be if these were your only light source?

Chamberstick and candle

The candle provided is a modern paraffin wax candle, these were developed in the late 1840s, earlier candles would have been made of beeswax if you were lucky (or rich) or tallow (animal fat) which smelt and burned with a smoky, poor-quality light.



Lantern

Although this modern lantern is fuelled by a tea light, in the past, wax or tallow candles would have been used.



Long-handled candle snuffer and wick trimmer and candle snuffer



For extinguishing candles and trimming their wicks.



Mary had a little lamb

This rhyme opens up a discussion of how different school life in the past was compared to today.

Girl's pinafore and mob cap (modern reproduction)

In Victorian times girls often wore pinafores such as this to protect their other clothing. Although the main illustration within our Nursery Rhymes pack does not show Mary wearing one, an additional illustration does. Lace collars were also common. Many photographs of schoolrooms at the time show girls wearing pinafores or lace collars but not mob caps – these are more an invention of illustrators than reality.



Teacher's ink pot and dip pen and pupil's slate and slate pencil

In Victorian schools, much of pupil's everyday work was done on slates. With classes routinely up to 60 children, the noise of them all copying the same thing at the same time, as was generally the case, must have been excruciating! Slates were still used in many schools up until the 1920s and 30s. Dip pens with ink were used by older pupils as well as teachers and blots were not allowed!

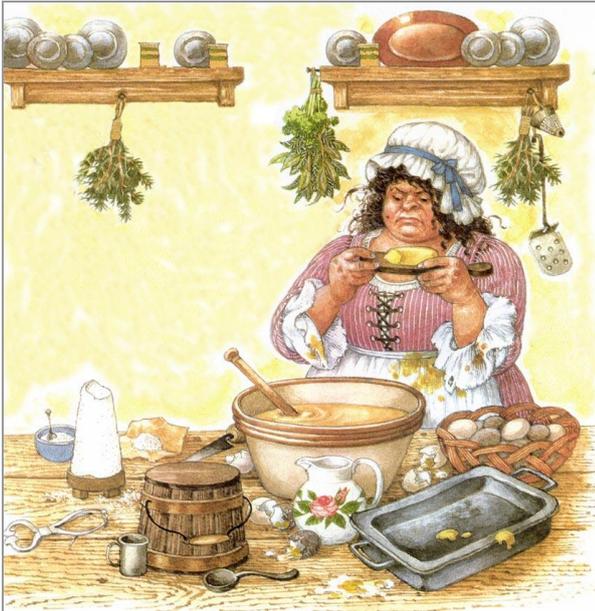


Teacher's cane

The cane is an indicator of the very strict regime in most Victorian schools. Breaking class rules or poor performance of any given task could lead to punishment.



Betty Botter



Some of the items in this illustration of Betty's kitchen will be familiar to your children others will not. We include several matching items in the collection, including the two most unusual ones.

Butter pats

(In the illustration Betty is closely examining her butter which is on one of these)

Butter did not come neatly wrapped from the supermarket but was bought in large lumps which had to be cut into suitable chunks then patted and batted into an even block using a pair of these.



Sugar nips and sugar cone

In the illustration these are on the right-hand side of the table.



Sugar was another commodity which was supplied in a very different form from today. It came as a solid cone shaped block. Useable sized pieces were 'nipped' from the cones using nips such as these. The nipped pieces might be further ground down using a knife blade, or the back of a spoon. (Another complication when making that quick cup of tea!!)

Betty Butter Biscuit tin (reproduction of an original Victorian tin)

In our Nursery Rhymes pack, we have slightly adapted the words of this rhyme (of which there are various versions anyway) to take advantage of availability of this artefact.



Small floral jug

Another item which is included as it matches an item in the illustration that accompanies the rhyme.

