

1979

Nursery Rhymes and Songs for Teaching English as a Second Language to Children

Nancy R. Hendricks

School for International Training

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcollections.sit.edu/ipp_collection



Part of the [Bilingual, Multilingual, and Multicultural Education Commons](#), [Elementary Education and Teaching Commons](#), and the [First and Second Language Acquisition Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Hendricks, Nancy R., "Nursery Rhymes and Songs for Teaching English as a Second Language to Children" (1979). *MA TESOL Collection*. 278.

https://digitalcollections.sit.edu/ipp_collection/278

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the SIT Graduate Institute at SIT Digital Collections. It has been accepted for inclusion in MA TESOL Collection by an authorized administrator of SIT Digital Collections. For more information, please contact digitalcollections@sit.edu.

NURSERY RHYMES AND SONGS FOR TEACHING
ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE TO CHILDREN

Nancy R. Hendricks
January, 1979

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the Master of Arts
in Teaching degree at the School for
International Training, Brattleboro,
Vermont.

This project by Nancy R. Hendricks is accepted in its present form.

Date January 30, 1979

Principal Advisor Alex Silverman

Project Advisor/Reader: Tanya Soha-Furlán

Author: Nancy R. Hendricks
Title: NURSERY RHYMES AND SONGS FOR TEACHING
ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE TO CHILDREN

Degree Awarded: Master of Arts in Teaching

Year Degree was Granted: 1979
Name of Faculty Advisor: Alex Silverman
Program: MAT--ESOL
Author's Current Address: MAT Program
School for International Training
Brattleboro, Vermont 05301

Abstract:

Fifty-one rhymes and songs are presented here for use in an ESL classroom. Because the rhymes were originally written for English-speaking children, their most appropriate usage in the ESL environment is also with children (under 13 years in age). The rhymes are grouped in categories according to the material each one presents. The categories are:

VOCABULARY:

Parts of the Body
People and Occupations
Animals
Clothes
Colors
Daily Activities
Flowers
Food

GRAMMATICAL STRUCTURES:

Simple Present	Can
Present Continuous	Will
Simple Past	Should and Would
Past Continuous	Could
Present Perfect	

CONVERSATIONAL EXCHANGES:

- Commands and Requests
- Conversational Exchanges
- Demonstration
- General Statements
- Narratives
- Personal Statements

Also included are several suggestions for class activities based on the rhymes and songs. These are drawn from my teaching experience in England, Summer 1978, at The American School in Switzerland, Surrey, England.

This project is a guide for the ESL teacher who would like to work with rhymes in the classroom. This collection is intended to add to the material a teacher needs not only to introduce new material to children but to reinforce, drill, and practice specific structures. The Table of Contents lists the rhymes according to the categories into which they fall. Therefore, a teacher can use the Table of Contents to determine if any of the rhymes will be suitable for his/her lesson plan.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
The Role of Rhymes and Songs in Language Learning and Teaching.	5
The Role in Presenting New Material.	8
The Role in Practicing Material Already Introduced	9
The Role in Developing Material Already Introduced and Practiced	10
Presenting Rhymes and Songs.	11
THE RHYMES AND SONGS:	
Vocabulary	14
Parts of the Body:	
"Head and Shoulders, Knees and Toes".	15
"I've Got Ten Little Fingers"	15
"Hokey Pokey"	16
People and Occupations:	
"What Are You Going to Be?"	17
Animals:	
"Farmer Brown's Got One Big Dog".	18
"Old MacDonald Had a Farm".	19
Clothes:	
"X is Wearing a Bright Blue Dress".	20
Colors:	
"Blue is the Sea"	21
"On My Blackboard (Paper) I Can Draw"	21
Flowers:	
"Lilies are White".	22

Vocabulary Rhymes and Songs:

Food:

"Stir the Soup"22

Daily Activities:

"This is the Way"23

"I Like to Skip"23

Suggested Activities for Practicing and Developing
Material in the Vocabulary Rhymes and Songs24

Grammatical Structures31

Simple Present:

"What Does the Cat Say?"33

"The Farmer's In His House"33

"The Farmer Sows His Seeds"34

Present Continuous:

"X is Wearing a Bright Blue Dress"35

"Here We Come Galloping"35

"We Have Come for Polly Ann"36

Simple Past:

"One Little Girl"37

"I Did, I Did, I Did"37

"There Were Ten in the Bed"38

"When I Was a Soldier"39

"This Little Pig"40

Past Continuous:

"As I Was Going to St. Ives"40

Perfect Tense:

"I've Got Ten Little Fingers"41

"Pussy Cat, Pussy Cat"41

Auxiliary Can:

"Can You Tell Me?"42

"Abracadabra"43

"A Train Going Up a Hill"43

Grammatical Structures Rhymes and Songs:

Auxiliary Will:

"Hush Little Baby" . . . . .	.44
"Lilies are White" . . . . .	.44

Auxiliaries Would and Should:

"Ten Green Bottles" . . . . .	.45
"If All the Seas Were One Sea" . . . . .	.46

Auxiliary Could:

"A Train Going Up a Hill" . . . . .	.47
"It's Raining, It's Pouring" . . . . .	.47

Suggested Activities for Practicing and Developing Material in the Grammatical Structures Rhymes and Songs48
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

Conversational Exchanges55
------------------------------------	-----

Commands and Requests:

"Two Little Birds Sitting on a Wall" . . . . .	.58
"Polly Put the Kettle On" . . . . .	.58

Conversational Exchanges:

"Sammy Thumb" . . . . .	.59
"Where is Thumbkin?" . . . . .	.60
"Moo Cow Moo Cow" . . . . .	.61

Demonstrations:

"This is the Great Big Indian Chief" . . . . .	.61
"This is the Way" . . . . .	.62

General Statements:

"If All the Seas Were One Sea" . . . . .	.63
"Every Morning at Eight O'Clock" . . . . .	.63
"Spring is Showery" . . . . .	.63

Narratives:

"Humpty Dumpty" . . . . .	.64
"Little Jack Horner" . . . . .	.64
"There Was an Old Woman Who Lived in a Shoe" . . . . .	.64

Conversational Exchanges Rhymes and Songs:

Personal Statements:

"If Only I Had Plenty of Money" . . . . .	.65
"I Like to Skip". . . . .	.65

Suggested Activities for Practicing and Developing Material in the Conversational Exchanges Rhymes and Songs66
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

Bibliography71
------------------------	-----

INTRODUCTION: JUSTIFICATION FOR BRINGING RHYMES AND
SONGS TO THE ESL CLASSROOM

In the summer of 1978, I had an enjoyable experience teaching English at a private boarding school in Surrey, England to non-native English speakers. My time at this school (The American School in Switzerland--England campus) was made particularly memorable because my students were all young children under 18 years of age. This was my first teaching encounter with non-adult language learners..

Immediately I discovered three realities about teaching children:

1. Children learn differently from adults.
2. Children cannot stay interested in one activity for any period of time resembling that of an adult's attention span.
3. Children have different motives for coming to an ESL program than the reasons that bring adults to the classroom. (Primarily, children are looking for companionship and a camaraderie within the classroom. The reasons their parents send them to the ESL class are very often completely dissimilar to the reasons of the children for being there.)

At The American School in Switzerland (TASIS) I was responsible for devising a learning sequence for my class. I searched each day (at times hurriedly and with some panic) for materials and new activities to keep my children awake, listening, and participating. At Foyle's Bookstore in London, I obtained a wonderful anthology of traditional English nursery and Mother Goose rhymes and songs. Another teacher, Ms. Johnnie Mae Denton, who also had a class of pre-teenagers, became very interested in utilizing the songs from my anthology, as she is an excellent guitarist with an exquisite singing voice. Initially, I chose to implement the

rhymes without song. Within a week our respective classes had discovered what each was missing--my class never sang, and her class never recited or acted out the rhymes dramatically. So, we two teachers began collaborating, exchanging ideas, doing team-teaching around the rhymes and songs, and bringing our two groups of children together for singing and reciting sessions on the lawn of the school.

I believe in the adaptation of rhymes for the ESL classroom because my experience of last summer was so positive and successful. In this MAT project, I have gathered all the rhymes and songs that I and my co-teacher, Johnnie Denton, incorporated into our ESL program at TASIS last summer. There are, in addition, several rhymes and songs which we did not have the chance to use, but which we had hoped to find time for.

Briefly, I would like to share the reasons that I think rhymes and songs work wonderfully as a serious part of an ESL program for children:

1. For the non-native speaker at the beginning stage, it is clearly easier to sing or recite a rhyme in English than it is to communicate personal information, wants, or needs. The rhythm and rhyme is naturally appealing to a child. The child is eager to be a part of the rhythm and to participate in reciting the rhyme.

2. When there is no language common to all the students, the need becomes urgent for some avenue by which everyone in the class can communicate together.

3. The need for a community "class spirit" manifests itself. A class in which every child feels welcomed as a participating member is a vital factor in effective teaching. Sharing the rhymes and songs as a group relaxes the tensions of competition and (hopefully) of inhibition.

4. Rhymes are easy to learn and memorize. The children derive visible satisfaction and confidence from this newly-acquired "fluency" that comes so quickly.

5. The pleasure of delivering a meaningful message in English (a story within the rhyme, for example) accurately and with fluidity sustains the children's interest in mastering new rhymes and also in understanding the vocabulary and structures contained in the rhymes. (As the teacher, you need not inform the children that they are practicing specific structures through the recitation of rhymes. They can learn the structures and enjoy the material without being aware that what is actually taking place is a grammar and/or vocabulary lesson.)

6. It is important that the verses be enjoyed exactly as the authors originally intended that they should be. These rhymes and songs were not written and designed to instruct, but rather to delight and entertain. Success in using rhymes in the ESL class is dependent upon retaining an atmosphere of entertainment and diversion from the other more obviously structured activities and lessons. With a class of children, the need for a diversionary yet beneficial activity is clearly felt.

7. The children like creative stimuli. The rhymes aid in awakening their appreciation of fanciful expression. Introducing rhymes as examples of creative writing results in a natural progression to self-expression on the part of the students. Many of the children are stimulated into composing new verses for the rhymes or new rhymes altogether. Once the children understand the structures within the rhyme, they can manipulate these structures to express their own ideas and interests. Understanding the structures comes from practicing them many times coupled with clear demonstrations and dramatizations by the teacher so that the structures have meaning.

8. The rhymes which I have included here serve as valuable cross-cultural lessons. The ESL students learn about the world of their native English-speaking peers through the subjects and vocabulary treated in the verses. For children who are learning English for the first time and

find themselves transplanted to and growing up in an English-speaking culture, a rhyme about eating Christmas pie or putting the kettle on for tea or playing in the snow provides a way for the children to discover what is common and familiar in their new environment.

9. When I brought rhymes to my ESL class of pre-teenagers, I was apprehensive initially that the children would reject my new idea as "baby-stuff". But I found that as long as I chose the rhymes carefully and remained sensitive to this potential danger of insulting the children, they were delighted. What an English-speaking child of ten might consider beneath his dignity often succeeds in delighting and challenging an ESL student of the same age.

The rhymes and songs which follow are suggested to teachers who are working with very young children, ages five to ten, possibly up to thirteen years of age. In choosing which rhymes to introduce, the teacher must always be sensitive to the maturity level of the students.

Perhaps some of the verses here could serve as a light relief for teenaged students and even adult learners. The teacher who knows her students well as people will have the ability to select which rhymes will be well received in the classroom.

THE ROLE OF RHYMES AND SONGS IN LANGUAGE LEARNING
AND TEACHING

There are four elements of progression in language teaching which I consider essential to follow as an ESL instructor. The first is the presentation of new material. Second and third are the practice of the material to enable students to learn it (both to memorize and to understand the rhyme) and the development of the same material to enable students to use and manipulate it to their individual needs. Last is the testing of the material to evaluate how well it has been learned.

A teacher who is concerned with presenting all the language skills (as opposed to one or two skills, such as reading or pronunciation) will probably turn to one of two approaches: structural or contextual. Students who are learning through a structural approach receive emphasis on the grammatical structures of the target language. One structure is presented at a time and in isolation from other structures. It is drilled exhaustively before the introduction of a new structure. For the beginning language learners, this strategy seriously restricts their ability to communicate individual needs in the new language. An example of the limitation of such a structural approach is the common practice of introducing the present continuous tense very soon in the sequence, before even the simple past tense is treated. The result is that the students know this tense in isolation from other tenses; however, in practice, the present continuous tense in English is very rarely adequate by itself to cover a communication situation.

In contrast to the step-by-step approach of structuralism, the contextual approach works with the "natural use" of language in situations of daily living. For example, the past tense might be introduced simultaneously with the present and the present continuous tenses. This could be done through a dialogue or a short story. The tenses are

not presented as the end goal, but as vehicles for communicating the desired message. The students become familiar with the dialogue or story--that is, they assimilate the new material. They are not made aware of which verb is in which tense. They master the ability to successfully convey the material to another person. After this has been accomplished, then the teacher makes them cognizant of the different verb tenses which they have employed. Beginners in an adult class learn language for specific realistic occasions--such as greeting people, shopping, travelling, etc.

The contextually-oriented teacher of young students involves the children in drawing pictures and talking about them, making model houses, playing simple games, etc. The students experience simulated life encounters and learn the specific language appropriate to each situation. Hopefully, this approach facilitates the ease with which the language learners acquire the tools to express their thoughts and feelings, their reactions and needs. A contextual approach seems to be patterned the most faithfully after the way in which a child learns his mother tongue.

In the contextual approach, repetition is not totally discounted, of course. There is a place for repetitive drilling. It should come after the presentation and the practice of new material, as in the manner explained above. When an ESL instructor is teaching contextually, the drilling of structures and vocabulary plays a less important, secondary role in the practice and development stages. It is not a part of the presentation of new material, and often it is not included in the practice period, either. However, as my second project advisor has said, "Repetition is essential in learning even for a child that is learning his mother tongue".

The structural and contextual approaches have been associated more with adult learners than with children. Because children learn so differently from adults, different

and special techniques must be incorporated into the lessons, whether the emphasis in approach is on structure or on content. Creative ideas are needed for practicing and developing the material to be taught. It is here that rhymes and songs can be extremely useful. This is the role of rhymes and songs in ESL.

THE ROLE IN PRESENTING NEW MATERIAL

New material can be introduced either by demonstration or through involvement. When the teacher demonstrates some new point, the students are made conscious of the lesson to be taught--usage of a vocabulary item, or a grammatical structure, for example. When the students are not made aware that the teacher is teaching something specific, then the new material is being presented through involvement. With a demonstration technique, the new material is the end product. In contrast, through involvement, the new material is the means to an end. This end could be a song or a rhyme that contains new, unfamiliar items, such as the usage of the past tense in the rhyme "This Little Piggy". By way of preparing the children to learn this rhyme, a story about the five little pigs could be told, including where the pigs lived, what each pig was like (each pig should be made as different from the others as possible), and, finally, the day the pigs went to market and what happened and why. After all this build-up, the rhyme is presented to summarize and encapsulate the day's lesson.

THE ROLE IN PRACTICING MATERIAL ALREADY INTRODUCED

There seem to be three basic ways to practice the sounds, structures, and vocabulary of a new language. They are:

1. Drills. Drills are overt (everyone recognizes the drill as a drill and also the purpose behind the drill). They can be mechanical and repetitious, or more complex, involving substitutions and transformations.

2. Rhymes and Songs. These are a way of practicing the material "covertly". The new point being practiced is embedded in a piece of meaningful language.

3. Dialogues and Conversational Exchanges. By this completely contextualized technique, the students learn to behave and speak as native-English speakers do in real-life situations (in contrast with rhymes and songs that present fictional circumstances, albeit realistic).

THE ROLE IN DEVELOPING MATERIAL ALREADY INTRODUCED
AND PRACTICED

The children need to gain personal control over the material so that they can use it in their daily activities and conversations. To ease a group of young students into talking, tools such as pictures, games, and painting and drawing are common. In addition, the children can be urged to create and tell stories and compose dialogues and plays. Rhymes and songs are helpful at this stage. When the children listen to the verses, they are being familiarized with more uses of the material which they have been learning and practicing. Finally, that valuable take-off point is reached where the children begin creating their own rhymes, using the new material.

PRESENTING RHYMES AND SONGS

To be successful and useful in the classroom, this material must make a dramatic and favorable impression. The children should, ideally, be drawn to the rhyme as naturally as they are drawn to a game. The vocabulary and structures must, therefore, be simple enough to attract and intrigue the children, and not frustrate and discourage them. The content of the verses should have relevance to the children's environment, their experiences, and their interests.

The teacher needs to bring dramatic flair to the presentation to make the most effective impact. Also, it is wise to be spontaneous and flexible with the material, changing any parts (vocabulary or structure) of the rhyme that may be too unusual and too difficult for the students. This is in keeping with the advice to choose material that speaks to the common and familiar world of children.

In using these rhymes, I have discovered that the children enjoy and profit from an introductory story or discussion about the rhyme before the actual presentation. This helps ensure that the vocabulary and the content are both understood. An introductory story is especially effective, relating the elements of the rhyme to familiar experiences and familiar language of the students. After the children have a story which they understand, the rhyme can be treated as a summary of that story, to be memorized (and thus preserved) in an enjoyable fashion. Pictures, gestures, and mimes are essential tools to convey the rhyme's meaning. These should be used both during the introduction and during the presentation of the rhyme or song. In many instances, gestures and mimes are integral parts of the recitation of the rhymes and the singing of the songs.

The teacher should repeat the verse at least twice before the children join in, and as often thereafter as is needed to help the students' memorization process. The learning of the rhyme can be very similar to a game.

After the entire class has performed with the teacher, groups or individuals can give competitive performances and judge who has learned the rhyme the best and who has performed most dramatically. Sometimes, a rhyme lends itself unto dramatization; different groups or individual children can take on the various roles and characters within a rhyme. (Examples of rhymes with dramatic potential are "When I Was a Soldier" and "Where is Thumbkin".)

After the presentation and the performances, the teacher can ask the children (those who are writing) to copy or write down the poem in their best handwriting. The children who do not write yet can illustrate the rhyme or model the characters.

Rhymes must be used judiciously if they are to be enjoyed. The rhyme must be put aside for another lesson or until another day as soon as the children show indications of restlessness and boredom. To derive the greatest benefit from the use of the material I am presenting here, the teacher has to remember always that these rhymes are intended as a supplementary and entertaining ingredient to the overall lesson which includes other activities and exercises less fanciful. It is also essential to remember that the children will retain interest in the rhymes and songs only as long as the verses continue to be pleasurable and fun. By spending perhaps ten to fifteen minutes of any one-hour lesson, the teacher won't be straining the students' interest. The result will be an enjoyable change from the drills, the dialogues, and all the other activities of the ESL classroom.

Concerning the daily use of rhymes in the lesson plan, my second project advisor has written, "Songs and/or rhymes can be used every day as long as they are not repeated so as to bore the children and as long as they are relevant to what is holding their interest at the moment".

In categorizing the role of rhymes and songs in the ESL classroom, it seems that they can be placed between mechanical drills and practice in simulated real-life situations. The rhymes have relevance to the children, and, thus, they have meaning. As practice and development of new material, they offer possibilities of dialogues and of dramatizations.

Obviously, rhymes and rhythm are appealing to children. The students won't forget the verses they learn (if the verses have been taught with care). One cannot say that all new material is so consistently and easily remembered as are rhymes and songs. Because reciting a rhyme is easier than talking, the children discover control over new language, and this new mastery can be utilized in everyday usage. By mastery, I mean two things: The children achieve an important new confidence in their ability to speak and communicate in English. This confidence facilitates their rate of progress in learning new material and in taking that new material out of the classroom and into their outside worlds. Secondly, and most importantly, the children learn (assimilate) several grammatical structures, sentence patterns, and vocabulary words which they can use to give and get information when they leave school and enter the society.

VOCABULARY

New vocabulary should not be presented in isolation, but rather in a clear situational context. However, after the basic meaning of the new word is understood this way, the children need to progress onto knowing a fuller meaning of the word. This means they need to know (to the extent that is possible) all the things to which the new word refers, all the situations in which it is used, and all the things to which the new word does not refer. Such a goal will not be reached in one or even five years of English classes, but striving to have the fullest possible command over vocabulary should be encouraged, surely.

Words of similar meaning should be distinguished from each other ("tall" is not the same as "high"). The children should understand that objects and events that appear similar or related are not always described the same way (horses gallop, but dogs don't; people have hands and fingers, but clocks only have hands).

The rhymes in this collection can be especially instrumental in rounding out the children's comprehension of a new vocabulary word in all its meanings and uses.

I have included only those rhymes which nicely demonstrate some important vocabulary for ESL children. They are grouped under headings which signify the key words occurring in each rhyme: Parts of the Body, People and Occupations, Animals, Clothes, Colors, Daily Activities, Flowers, and Food.

VOCABULARY RHYMES

PARTS OF THE BODY:

"Head and Shoulders, Knees and Toes"

Head and shoulders, knees and toes,
knees and toes!
Head and shoulders, knees and toes,
knees and toes!
And eyes and ears and mouth and nose,
Head and shoulders, knees and toes,
knees and toes!

"I've Got Ten Little Fingers"

I've got ten little fingers.
I've got ten little toes.
I've got two ears.
I've got two eyes.
And just one little nose.

"Hokey Pokey"

You put your right foot in,
You take your right foot out.
You put your right foot in,
And you shake it all about.
You do the Hokey Pokey
And you turn around.
That's what it's all about.

You put your right hand in,
You take your right hand out.
You take your right hand in,
And you shake it all about.
You do the Hokey Pokey
And you turn around.
That's what it's all about.

You put your right leg in,
You take your right leg out.
You put your right leg in,
And you shake it all about.
You do the Hokey Pokey
And you turn around.
That's what it's all about.

You put your right arm in,
You take your right arm out.
Etc.
Etc.
Etc.

You put your big head in,
You take your big head out.
Etc.
Etc.
Etc.

You put your left shoulder in,
You take your left shoulder out.
Etc.
Etc.
Etc.

(toe, finger, elbow, side, hip, knee)

PEOPLE AND OCCUPATIONS:

"What Are You Going to Be?"

What are you going to be?
What are you going to be?
I'm going to be a soldier,
That's the life for me.

What are you going to be?
What are you going to be?
I'm going to be a fireman,
That's the life for me.

What are you going to be?
What are you going to be?
I'm going to be a teacher,
That's the life for me.

What are you going to be?
What are you going to be?
I'm going to be a doctor,
That's the life for me.

(policeman

actor

dancer

artist

writer

journalist

truck driver

veterinarian

office manager

businessman/woman

etc.)

ANIMALS:

"Farmer Brown's Got One Big Dog"

Farmer Brown's got one big dog.
Bow wow, wow, wow, wow.
One big dog and two small puppies,
Bow wow, wow, wow, wow.

Farmer Brown's got three big cats,
Meow, meow, meow, meow.
Three big cats and four small kittens,
Meow, meow, meow, meow.

Farmer Brown's got five big cows,
Moo, moo, moo, moo, moo.
Five big cows and six small calves,
Moo, moo, moo, moo, moo.

Farmer Brown's got seven big ducks,
Quack, quack, quack, quack.
Seven big ducks and eight small ducklings,
Quack, quack, quack, quack.

(Nine big horses and ten small foals,
Eleven big chickens and twelve small chicks,
Thirteen big ducks and fourteen small
ducklings,
etc.etc.etc.)

"Old MacDonald Had a Farm"

Old MacDonald had a farm,
E, I, E, I, O.
And on his farm he had some ducks,
E, I, E, I, O.
With a quack quack here and a quack quack there.
Here a quack, there a quack.
Everywhere a quack, quack.
Old MacDonald had a farm,
E, I, E, I, O.

Old MacDonald had a farm,
E, I, E, I, O.
And on his farm he had some:

cows,
lions,
elephants,
birds,
bees,
giraffes,
kangaroos,
etc.

CLOTHES:

"X is Wearing a Bright Blue Dress"

X is wearing a bright blue dress,
Bright blue dress, bright blue dress,
X is wearing a bright blue dress,
All day long.

Y is wearing a bright green shirt,
Bright green shirt, bright green shirt,
Y is wearing a bright green shirt,
All day long.

Examples:

Johnny is wearing a dark blue hat.

Mary is wearing a light blue sweater.

shoes,

socks,

tie,

jacket,

vest,

trousers,

slacks,

bathing suit,

coat,

gloves,

mittens,

boots,

etc.

COLORS:

"Blue is the Sea"

Blue is the sea,
Green is the grass,
White are the clouds,
As they slowly pass.

Black are the crows,
Brown are the trees,
Red are the sails,
Of a ship in the breeze.

(Note: The grammar in this rhyme is in "poetic structure".

This is not a disadvantage. Even young children can learn to distinguish poetic writing from prose and to appreciate the difference. As a part of a lesson using this rhyme, the students could orally "transcribe" the poetic structure into everyday speech. Example:

"Blue is the sea" becomes "The sea is blue".

"On My Blackboard (Paper) I Can Draw"

On my blackboard I can draw
One little house with one green door,
Two brown gates that open wide,
Three red steps that lead inside,
Four little chimneys painted white,
Five little windows shining bright,
Six yellow daffodils straight and tall,
Growing up against the wall.

FLOWERS:

"Lilies are White"

Lilies are white, dilly dilly,
Rosemary's green,
When you are king, dilly dilly,
I will be queen.

Roses are red, dilly dilly,
Lavender's blue,
If you have me, dilly dilly,
I will have you.

FOOD:

"Stir the Soup"

Stir the soup
in the pot,
Make it nice
and hot.

Round and round
and round and round,
Stir the soup
in the pot.

Cut the bread
on the table,
Make it neat
if you are able.

Slice and slice
and slice and slice,
Cut the bread
on the table.

DAILY ACTIVITIES:

"This is the Way"

This is the way we wash our face,
wash our face, wash our face.
This is the way we wash our face,
At seven o'clock in the morning.

This is the way we brush our teeth,
brush our teeth, brush our teeth.
This is the way we brush our teeth,
At seven o'clock in the morning.

This is the way we comb our hair,
comb our hair, comb our hair.
This is the way we comb our hair,
At seven o'clock in the morning.

This is the way we eat our breakfast,
eat our breakfast, eat our breakfast.
This is the way we eat our breakfast,
At eight o'clock in the morning.

This is the way we wash the dishes,
etc.

This is the way we drink our milk,
etc.

This is the way we cook our dinner,
etc.

This is the way we do our homework,
etc.

etc. etc. etc.

"I Like to Skip"

I like to skip,
I like to jump,
I like to run about.
I like to play,
I like to sing,
I like to laugh and shout.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR PRACTICING AND DEVELOPING

MATERIAL IN THE VOCABULARY RHYMES AND SONGS

1. In a rhyme such as "Heads and Shoulders, Knees and Toes", physical gestures are the best way to capture the children's interest. Acting out the lyrics by touching each part of the body as it is recited is enormously popular with children. The students also enjoy making a competition out of the rhyme. They perform it individually to judge who can recite it the fastest and with the most accuracy. (The physical movement involved in this kind of activity is absolutely beneficial in letting out energy, and afterwards, the children are calmer and more attentive.)
2. Songs like "Hokey Pokey" are familiar to American and English schoolchildren. I can't suggest a better way of implementing this song than to follow the example of the native English-speaking children who create a circle dance with "Hokey Pokey". All the children form a circle and then sing the song, obeying the instructions in the lyrics:
 "You put your right foot in, you take your right
 foot out, etc."
If you would like to use this suggestion, but you do not know the tune for "Hokey Pokey", consult any elementary music teacher or ask your contemporaries and colleagues. I am certain someone will be able to supply the music.
3. As an optional assignment, the children can be asked to compose their own melodies for a specific rhyme. Concentrating on a musical medium for the rhyme will also focus their concentration on the content and structure of the rhyme. (A short rhyme like "I've Got Ten Little Fingers" would be best for this activity.)

4. New words are best introduced by pictures, I think, assuming that the presentation of a new vocabulary word includes a contextual approach (using the word in a story framework or, at the very least, in an easily understood sentence). Picture cards are the best tools for presenting new vocabulary in these rhymes. Picture cards of new animals, flowers, clothing, foods, etc. are very, very helpful. (Of course, stick figures or hand-drawn pictures are all right if picture cards are unavailable.)

5. "What Are You Going to Be" is a rhyme fertile with activities potential:

1. After the children learn the verses that the teacher presents, they can be asked to write their own verses, supplying words for occupations that they know (or want to know). This could be a homework assignment. The teacher could ask each student to find the words for at least two occupations and bring the new words to class by reciting them in new verses of "What Are You Going to Be". (Note: This activity serves as a little values clarification exercise, to the extent that each child can answer the question: What are you going to be when you grow up?. Each child can give his own personal answer. "I don't know what I'm going to be" is acceptable as an answer unless the whole class chooses it as their response. The students should be pressed to give some definite answer, for the purpose of vocabulary practice, as well as a values clarification exercise.)

2. As a practice activity, the teacher can act as an "interviewer" or choose one student to be the "interviewer". The interviewer asks the question, "What are you going to be?" and the child being interviewed (each child gets a turn) must answer the question by finishing the lines of the rhyme:

"I'm going to be a _____
That's the life for me."

5. 3. The teacher can hold up picture cards of people in different occupations. The children must identify each occupation and use it in the lyrics of the rhyme.

4. Using a tape recorder, the class can record the rhyme. After they have each composed a new verse for the rhyme, each child can record his verse into the tape recorder. Either the first person or the third person form can be used:

CLASS: "What is Paul going to be?
What is Paul going to be?"

PAUL: "I'm going to be an artist,
That's the life for me."

OR

PAUL: "What am I going to be?
What am I going to be?"

PAUL: "I'm going to be an artist,
That's the life for me."

5. This rhyme provides good practice in the grammatical structure: "going to be" in addition to practice in new vocabulary.

6. The rhymes teaching animal vocabulary are very amusing for the children, especially when they can imitate the sounds that animals make. "Old MacDonald Had a Farm" is classically successful in entertaining children and teaching them the names of the animals simultaneously. The range of animals does not have to be limited to barnyard creatures. Animals of the jungle, sea, sky, prairie, forest, and mountains should be included. The children must decide what sound each animal makes (the giraffe, for example). As homework, the teacher can give pictures of animals to the students. The students must discover the correct name of

6. the animals in their assigned pictures and come to class ready to sing or recite a verse (or verses) about their animal(s).
7. "This is the Way" is another song/rhyme that is familiar to most English-speaking adults and children. The tune is easy and appealing. Suggestions:

1. Using a tape recorder works well with this song. The children can sing the lyrics into the recorder as a group or in smaller groups or individually (if the class atmosphere is comfortable enough and non-threatening)..

2. Use this song as a substitution drill (almost all of these rhymes work in this way, but some more successfully than others). The children can offer their own ideas of activities within the structure of the song. One child can mime an activity while the other students guess what it is and use it in a verse of the song. The teacher can ask the students to mime activities for which they do not know (but would like to know) the vocabulary. Then the teacher can supply the new words, and they can be practiced in the song.

3. "This is the Way" provides a convenient framework for practicing time, in addition to vocabulary. The last line of each verse mentions a time of day:

"At seven o'clock in the morning."

"At ten o'clock in the evening." etc.

As the children sing the song, they can change the times. For example, they can sing about cooking breakfast at 8:45 in the evening. If they are sophisticated enough, they will realize that this is an unusual and silly time to cook breakfast, and they will appreciate the humor.

8. "I Like to Skip" presents an avenue for practicing vocabulary for physical and passive activities (such as reading, sleeping, etc.) But it also introduces the structure of "LIKE + INFINITIVE" as in "I like to _____". The children can substitute a similar structure that works equally well: "WANT + INFINITIVE" as in "I want to _____". (Note: This rhyme offers a mini-strategy in Values Clarification. Each child can reveal what he likes or wants to do most.)

9. As a vehicle for introducing and reinforcing clothing vocabulary, the rhyme "X is Wearing" is excellent. The props for implementing the rhyme are the clothes that the children are wearing. By replacing "X and Y" with names of students, the rhyme becomes more interesting to the children. The teacher can point to an article of clothing on a child and either supply the new vocabulary or ask the class to identify the clothing and weave it into the rhyme. For example, if Jonathan is wearing a dark green hat, the teacher points to the hat, and the students recite a new verse for the rhyme:

"Jonathan is wearing a dark green hat,
dark green hat, dark green hat.
Jonathan is wearing a dark green hat,
all day long."

Or, the teacher can ask each student to describe himself to the rest of the class and describe his neighbor or partner, according to the clothing they are wearing. Adjectives such as dark, light, bright, clean, dirty, old, new, pretty, etc. also receive treatment and practice. However, be careful not to embarrass any child by using "derogatory" adjectives in describing his/her personal clothing.

10. The verses involving color vocabulary lend themselves to drawing and coloring activities. Each student can be given paper and crayons and an adequate space on a desk, table, or the floor to spread himself and his materials out.

10. Then, the teacher recites the rhyme to the class as each student listens and draws the picture that the teacher has described. "Blue is the Sea" and "On My Blackboard (Paper) I Can Draw" are rhymes which are perfect for this activity. Obviously, this is a way to develop the students' knowledge and mastery of the vocabulary. The students should be very familiar with the rhyme before such a "drawing dictation" is given. A variation of this exercise is to substitute different colors in the rhymes, and thus testing the children's knowledge of various shades and hues (purple, light blue, pink, etc.). Working on other vocabulary (nouns), the teacher can substitute different objects as well as colors. Example:

"On my paper I can draw
One little house with one
_____ (green/yellow)
_____ (door/roof)."

(Note: When these rhymes are being introduced for the first time, it is effective to have a colorful picture of the scene depicted by the rhyme. The children can see the objects being described, and this helps them to fully understand the content.)

11. To present new vocabulary for flowers and food, pictures are best. To practice the new words, rhymes such as "Lilies are White" and "Stir the Soup" are helpful. Once the children learn the structure of the rhyme, the teacher or a student can test their knowledge of vocabulary (and their control of the rhyme itself) by asking the students to substitute words. The teacher or one student can hold up a picture of a flower or a food (these words must have already been introduced) and request the class to use this picture in the rhyme. Example: A picture of a daffodil is held up. The proper response, using "Lilies are White" is:

"Daffodils are yellow, dilly dilly,
Rosemary's green,
When you are king, dilly dilly,
I will be queen."

12. Keeping a class list of new vocabulary is always a good idea. For food vocabulary, an additional kind of list can be maintained. For each new food that is introduced (and practiced through the rhyme "Stir the Soup"), vocabulary concerning how to use and prepare that food can also be presented. Then a chart including both the food list and the category "What We Do With This Food" can be utilized.

Example:

FOOD

soup
bread
potatoes
fruit

WHAT WE DO WITH THIS FOOD

stir
bake, slice
peel, bake, mash
peel, cut

GRAMMATICAL STRUCTURES

When composing a sentence in a new language, it is the tendency of the non-native speaker to transfer structures, syntax, and other features from his own language. Obviously, this is a serious impediment to fluency in the target language, no matter how perfect and comprehensive a student's knowledge of grammar and vocabulary may be. In each language sentences must be arranged in the particular ways that are acceptable and meaningful to a listener of that language.

Children in the ESL class will revert to transferring familiar structures from their native language as quickly as adults rely on this tendency. Through presenting situations representative of daily life encounters and the language used in them, rhymes and songs can be of great values to the ESL instructor.

Some rhymes exhibit one specific sentence pattern, such as:

"What Does the Cat Say?"

What does the cat say? Meow meow.
What does the dog say? Bow wow.
What does the donkey say? Ee aw.
What does the crow say? Caw caw.
Etc.etc."

Other rhymes illustrate two closely linked sentence patterns, such as Request and Response, as in:

"We Have Come for Polly Ann"

"We have come for Polly Ann
Polly Ann Polly Ann
We have come for Polly Ann
Can she come out to play?"

Polly Ann is sweeping
Polly Ann is sweeping
Polly Ann is sweeping
She can't come out to play."

I have divided the following rhymes into two groups, concentrating on verbs. All the rhymes and songs presented here either illustrate a specific verb tense or an auxiliary verb. If the teacher has been working on the auxiliary "can", for example, this collection may provide a rhyme with which to practice and develop the children's facility in using "can".

GRAMMATICAL STRUCTURE RHYMES

SIMPLE PRESENT:

"What Does the Cat Say?"

What does the cat say? Meow. Meow.
What does the dog say? Bow wow.
What does the donkey say? Ee Aw.
What does the crow say? Caw, caw.
What does the farmer say? Shoo. shoo.
What does the cow say? Moo. Moo.
What do they all say?

"The Farmer's In His House"

The farmer's in his house.
The farmer's in his house.
E, I, E, I.
The farmer's in his house.

The farmer wants a wife.
The farmer wants a wife.
E, I, E, I.
The farmer wants a wife.

The wife wants a son.
The wife wants a son.
E, I, E, I.
The wife wants a son.

The son wants a dog.
The son wants a dog.
E, I, E, I.
The son wants a dog.

The dog wants a bone.
The dog wants a bone.
E, I, E, I.
The dog wants a bone.

We all bring the bone.
We all bring the bone.
E, I, E, I.
We all bring the bone.

SIMPLE PRESENT:

"The Farmer Sows His Seeds"

The farmer sows his seeds.
The farmer sows his seeds.
Oats, beans, and barley O
The farmer sows his seeds.

The wind begins to blow.
The wind begins to blow.
Oats, beans, and barley O
The wind begins to blow.

The rain begins to fall.
The rain begins to fall.
Oats, beans, and barley O
The rain begins to fall.

The sun begins to shine.
The sun begins to shine.
Oats, beans, and barley O
The sun begins to shine.

The wheat begins to grow.
The wheat begins to grow.
Oats, beans, and barley O
The wheat begins to grow.

The farmer cuts the grains.
The farmer cuts the grains.
Oats, beans, and barley O
The farmer cuts the grains.

The farmer binds the sheaves.
The farmer binds the sheaves.
Oats, beans, and barley O
The farmer binds the sheaves.

And now the harvest is in.
And now the harvest is in.
Oats, beans, and barley O
And now the harvest is in.

PRESENT CONTINUOUS:

"X is Wearing a Bright Blue Dress"

X is wearing a bright blue dress,
bright blue dress, bright blue dress.
X is wearing a bright blue dress,
All day long.

Y is wearing a bright green shirt,
bright green shirt, bright green shirt.
Y is wearing a bright green shirt,
All day long.

Examples:

James is wearing dark brown shoes,
Debbie is wearing light blue jeans,
Martha is wearing a dark red skirt,
etc.

"Here We Come Galloping"

Here we come galloping,
Galloping, galloping.
Galloping over the down.
Robin is riding a dapple grey pony,
My little pony is brown.

PRESENT CONTINUOUS:

"We Have Come for Polly Ann"

We have come for Polly Ann,
Polly Ann, Polly Ann.
We have come for Polly Ann.
Can she come out to play?

Polly Ann is sweeping,
Polly Ann is sweeping,
Polly Ann is sweeping,
She can't come out to play.

We have come for Polly Ann,
Polly Ann, Polly Ann.
We have come for Polly Ann.
Can she come out to play?

Polly Ann is eating,
Polly Ann is eating,
Polly Ann is eating,
She can't come out to play.

We have come for Polly Ann,
Polly Ann, Polly Ann.
We have come for Polly Ann.
Can she come out to play?

Polly Ann is sleeping,
Polly Ann is sleeping,
Polly Ann is sleeping,
She can't come out to play.

We have come for Polly Ann,
Polly Ann, Polly Ann.
We have come for Polly Ann.
Can she come out to play?

Examples:

Polly Ann is reading

Polly Ann is working

Polly Ann is cooking

Polly Ann is studying

etc.

SIMPLE PAST:

"One Little Girl"

One little girl sat on the ground.
One little girl danced round and round.
One little girl danced here, danced there.
One little girl danced everywhere.

Two little girls sat on the ground.
Two little girls danced round and round.
Two little girls danced here, danced there.
Two little girls danced everywhere.

Three little girls sat on the ground.
Three little girls danced round and round.
Three little girls danced here, danced there.
Three little girls danced everywhere.

Four little girls sat on the ground,
etc.

"I Did, I Did, I Did"

I did, I did, I did.
I did my washing today.
I did my washing today.
And now it's time to play.

I did, I did, I did.
I did my work today.
I did my work today.
And now it's time to play.

I did, I did, I did.
I did my studying today.
I did my studying today.
And now it's time to play.

I did, I did, I did.
I did my homework today.
I did my homework today.
And now it's time to play.

I did, I did, I did.
I did my chores today.
etc.

SIMPLE PAST:

"There Were Ten in the Bed"

There were ten in the bed
And the little one said:
Roll over, Roll over.
So they all rolled over,
And one fell out.

There were nine in the bed
And the little one said:
Roll over, Roll over.
So they all rolled over,
And one fell out.

There were eight in the bed
And the little one said:
Roll over, Roll over.
So they all rolled over,
And one fell out.

There were seven in the bed
And the little one said:
Roll over, Roll over.
So they all rolled over,
And one fell out.

There were six in the bed

There were five in the bed

There were four in the bed

There were three in the bed

There were two in the bed

There was one in the bed

There were none in the bed
And no one said:
Roll over, Roll over.
So no one rolled over,
And no one fell out.

SIMPLE PAST:

"When I Was a Soldier"

When I was a soldier,
A soldier, a soldier,
When I was a soldier,
This was how I went.

When I was a policeman,
A policeman, a policeman,
When I was a policeman,
This was how I went.

When I was a grocer,
A grocer, a grocer,
When I was a grocer,
This was how I went.

When I was a carpenter,
A carpenter, a carpenter,
When I was a carpenter,
This was how I went.

Examples:

When I was a fisherman

When I was a farmer

When I was a secretary

When I was a fireman

etc.

SIMPLE PAST:

"This Little Pig"

This little pig went to market.
This little pig stayed home.
This little pig had roast beef.
This little pig had none.
And this little pig went: wee, wee, wee!
All the way home.

PAST CONTINUOUS TENSE:

"As I Was Going to St. Ives"

As I was going to St. Ives,
I met a man with seven wives.

Every wife had seven sacks.
Every sack had seven cats.
Every cat had seven kittens.

Kittens, cats, sacks, and wives,
How many were there going to St. Ives?

PERFECT TENSE:

"I've Got Ten Little Fingers"

I've got ten little fingers.
I've got ten little toes.
I've got two ears,
I've got two eyes,
And just one little nose.

"Pussy Cat, Pussy Cat"

Pussy cat, pussy cat,
Where have you been?

I've been to London
to see the Queen.

Pussy cat, pussy cat,
What have you done there?

I've frightened a little mouse
under the chair there.

(Note: This rhyme is specifically relevant to children studying British English and culture. It might be too confusing for ESL children in an American environment, i.e.: "Who is the Queen?" and "Where is London?" are questions that could be difficult to answer at the level of the children's English.)

AUXILIARY VERB: CAN

"Can You Tell Me?"

Can you tell me,
Can you tell me,
What little boys can do?
They can run and jump.
They can run and jump.
So I can jump, too.

Can you tell me,
Can you tell me,
What little girls can do?
They can dance and skip.
They can dance and skip.
So I can skip, too.

Can you tell me,
Can you tell me,
What little soldiers can do?
They can fight and march.
They can fight and march.
So I can march, too.

Can you tell me,
Can you tell me,
What little babies can do?
They can eat and sleep.
They can eat and sleep.
So I can sleep, too.

AUXILIARY VERB: CAN

"Abracadabra"

Abracadabra, wizzy woo.
I can fly, and so can you!

"A Train Going Up a Hill"

I wish I could.
I wish I could.
I wish I could.

I think I can.
I think I can.
I think I can.

I thought I could.
I thought I could.
I thought I could.

AUXILIARY VERB: WILL

"Hush Little Baby"

Hush little baby, don't say a word.
Mommy will give you a mocking bird.

And if that mocking bird won't sing,
Mommy will give you a diamond ring.

And if that diamond ring gets broken,
Mommy will give you a billy goat.

And if that billy goat won't pull,
Mommy will give you a cart and bull.

And if that cart and bull turns over,
Mommy will give you a dog named Rover.

And if that dog named Rover won't bark,
Mommy will give you a horse and cart.

And if that horse and cart breaks down,
You'll still be the sweetest little baby
in town.

"Lilies are White"

Lilies are white, dilly dilly
Rosemary's green.

You will be king, dilly dilly
I will be queen.

Roses are red, dilly dilly
Lavender's blue.

You will have me, dilly dilly
I will have you.

AUXILIARY VERBS: WOULD AND SHOULD

"Ten Green Bottles"

Ten green bottles standing on the wall,
Ten green bottles standing on the wall.
And if one green bottle should accidentally
fall,
There would be nine green bottles standing
on the wall.

Nine green bottles standing on the wall,
Nine green bottles standing on the wall.
And if one green bottle should accidentally
fall,
There would be eight green bottles standing
on the wall.

Eight green bottles standing on the wall,
Eight green bottles standing on the wall.
And if one green bottle should accidentally
fall,
There would be seven green bottles standing
on the wall.

Seven green bottles standing on the wall

Six green bottles standing on the wall

Five green bottles standing on the wall

Four green bottles standing on the wall

Three green bottles standing on the wall

Two green bottles standing on the wall

One green bottle standing on the wall,
One green bottle standing on the wall.
And if one green bottle should accidentally
fall,
There would be no green bottles standing
on the wall.

AUXILIARY VERBS: WOULD AND SHOULD

"If All the Seas Were One Sea"

If all the seas were one sea,
What a great sea it would be!

And if all the trees were one tree,
What a great tree it would be!

And if this tree were to fall in the sea,
My! What a splish-splash there would be!

AUXILIARY VERB: COULD:

"A Train Going Up a Hill"

I wish I could.
I wish I could.
I wish I could.

I think I can.
I think I can.
I think I can.

I thought I could.
I thought I could.
I thought I could.

"It's Raining, It's Pouring"

It's raining, it's pouring,
The old man is snoring.

He jumped into bed,
And bumped his head,

And couldn't get up in the morning!

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR PRACTICING AND DEVELOPING
MATERIAL IN THE GRAMMATICAL STRUCTURE RHYMES AND SONGS

1. A simple rhyme such as "What Does the Cat Say?" has limited possibilities. It is more of a drill on one kind of sentence pattern--the simple question. But it is especially useful because it employs the operator "does" which often confuses children. By the repetition of this rhyme, the children assimilate the question pattern using "does". The rhyme can also be used to practice "do".
For example:

"What does the cat say?" becomes "What do cats say?"

"What does the dog say?" becomes "What do dogs say?"

Another interesting variation is to ask the children to create their own animals and the sounds that their fantastical (nonexistant) animals make. This idea serves as an outlet for the children's imagination, energy, and enthusiasm. The last line of the rhyme is very popular because everyone gets to talk at the same time and loudly: "What do they all say?"

2. The two rhymes/songs about "farmers" in this section possess the same tune: "The Farmer's In His House" and "The Farmer Sows His Seeds". Suggestions:

1. These two songs lend themselves unto dramatization very nicely. Each piece has a cast of five, and the class can volunteer for the parts (or be drafted).

"The Farmer's In His House":

the farmer
a wife
a son
a dog
a bone

"The Farmer Sows His Seeds":

the farmer
the wind
the rain
the sun
the wheat

2. Each song is utilized to its fullest benefit when an explanation of the plot precedes the singing. The students who are cast in the various roles need to understand their "characters". For example, the child who is playing the wind needs to know that he must "begin to blow" when his time comes to do so. The song should be practiced several times before any enactment of the song's content should be attempted. As the class sings the song, the children who have been "cast" in the five roles should perform in timing with the narration of the song. (This is a very simple activity, although I may have failed in describing it simply or succinctly.) I would recommend getting the "cast" together for at least one rehearsal prior to the "performance".

2. 2. A quieter activity, that can work well with rhymes like these utilizes the rhyme's potential for self-expression. Students with imagination and a solid understanding of the structure of the rhyme can create their own verses, using the rhyme they have learned as a model. With "The Farmer Sows His Seeds" as a pattern, the children can write about any other kind of cycle (such as a year at school or a day at school). They can write about themselves and what they do from the time they rise until bedtime. Or, they can write about someone they know or something they have knowledge of (a baseball game or how to make cookies, etc.). This activity resembles an ESL "operation" in which one event or activity is described, using one verb tense consistently. The activity is taken from its beginning to its conclusion--a cycle. The children may need individual help with their writing, as they may want to use unfamiliar vocabulary. They may need help as well with using the correct form of the verb (always in the present tense). Obviously an activity such as this could be enlarged to accommodate practice and development exercises with other verb tenses. This assumes that the students have been well introduced to the particular verb tense previously.

3. "We Have Come for Polly Ann" is an example of a rhyme which can become a short dialogue. In this rhyme, there are two vocal parts, and one pantomiming role. The class can divide into two groups for the dialogue, or individuals can take the two speaking roles.

Voice One: "We have come for Polly Ann
Polly Ann, Polly Ann
We have come for Polly Ann
Can she come out to play?"

Voice Two: "Polly Ann is sweeping
Polly Ann is sweeping
Polly Ann is sweeping
She can't come out to play."

Of course, the student who takes the role of Polly Ann must pantomime the action in the second verse. One technique is to ask "Polly Ann" to mime the action while the first verse is being recited. This causes the person or group that is speaking the second verse to concentrate on Polly Ann, guess her activity, and decide how to describe it orally in the second verse. If the child who plays Polly Ann is shy or uncertain, the teacher might help her decide what action to pantomime.

4. A rhyme like "One Little Girl" can be developed in class using a technique that suggests the "Total Physical Response". After the original lyrics of the rhyme have been presented, practiced, understood, and enacted, the teacher can change the lyrics and have the children perform according to the "instructions" of the rhyme. For example:

The teacher says: "One little boy sat on the ground." She points to a boy who understands that he has been chosen to be the boy in the rhyme. Accordingly, he sits on the ground.

The teacher says: "One little boy jumped up and down." The child continues to enact the "instructions".

The teacher says: "One little boy jumped here,
jumped there, etc."

4. The child continues, following these "instructions" of the rhyme. All the vocabulary must have been introduced previous to any attempt to spontaneously enact an unfamiliar variation on the rhyme. For example, it is necessary that the children know the word "jumped" (or at least that they have had the opportunity to know and learn the word). Before this "game" is played, the rules must be discussed and explained carefully. After many or all of the children have had the opportunity to perform, the class should review the verbs that were used, writing them down and/or orally practicing the verses.

5. For work on substituting different verbs (but always using the same grammatical structure), rhymes such as "I Did, I Did, I Did" and "Can You Tell Me" are very suitable. One especially outgoing child can play "interrogator" for this activity. His role is to ask students at random one appropriate question that elicits the rhyme as the correct response. Example:

Interrogator: "Did you do your washing today?"

Student #1: "I did, I did, I did.
I did my washing today,
I did my washing today.
And now it's time to play."

Interrogator: "Did you do your studying today?"

Student #2: "I did, I did, I did.
I did my studying today,
I did my studying today.
And now it's time to play."

An example using the rhyme "Can You Tell Me":

Interrogator: "Can you tell me,
Can you tell me,
What little boys can do?"

Student #1: "They can run and jump.
They can run and jump,
So I can jump, too."

Interrogator: "Can you tell me,
Can you tell me,
What little dogs can do?"

Student #2: "They can bite and bark.
They can bite and bark,
So I can bark, too."

Before this activity, the teacher should supply both the "interrogator" and the students with good questions and appropriate answers. If some of the vocabulary is new, it is often understood by using it in the proper context within the rhyme.

6. Pictures are very good with rhymes that tell a story--- "As I Was Going to St. Ives", for example. The teacher can draw a colorful and clear picture of the scenario depicted by the rhyme. After the students have recited the rhyme, one child can use the picture to tell the story to the class, pointing to the relevant objects and people in the picture. This particular rhyme presents an arithmetical puzzle that captures the interest of the children and challenges them in a nonthreatening, fun way. The rhyme talks about "seven wives with seven sacks with seven cats with seven kittens". The last line is: "Kittens, cats, sacks, and wives, How many were there going to St. Ives?" The children must add up the numbers carefully to answer the question. If the teacher knows that the students are sufficiently grounded in arithmetic, she can change the numbers involved. For example:

"As I was going to St. Ives,
I met a man with twelve wives.
Every wife had thirteen sacks.
Every sack had nine cats.
Every cat had ten kittens.
Kittens, cats, sacks, and wives,
How many were there going to St. Ives?"

It may be more appropriate to assign this puzzle for homework rather than an in-class activity. The students will be intrigued.

7. The rhyme "A Train Going Up a Hill" has good potential as a jazz chant. This does not need additional explanation, I think. Just envision a train with an earnest, hard-working face and draw a picture of such a train for the children. Imagine how the train would recite this rhyme as it is struggling to make it up a hill. There should be much emphasis, stress, and intonation used on the verbs:

"I wish I could" (WISTFUL, SINCERE)

"I think I can" (HOPEFUL, OPTIMISTIC)

"I thought I could" (TRIUMPHANT)

8. "Hush Little Baby" is a pretty lullaby which needs a careful story preparation and explanation of the new vocabulary: mocking bird, diamond ring, billy goat, cart and bull, dog named Rover, horse and cart, horse and cart breaks down. Use pictures to convey the meaning of these words.

9. "Lilies are White" can be used to practice the auxiliary WILL in question form as well as in statement form, by changing the lyrics:

"Lilies are white, dilly dilly
Rosemary's green,
Will you be king? dilly dilly
Will I be queen?"

"Roses are red, dilly dilly
Lavender's blue.
Will you have me? dilly dilly
Will I have you?"

Perhaps this version of the rhyme should be given first. Then, the original rhyme can be presented as answering the questions of the first version.

10. "Ten Green Bottles" is a rowdy chantlike song. It, too, can be brought to the class in the form of a jazz chant--starting soft, progressing to very loud volumes, then returning to a soft level of noise and varying the tempo of the chant, also.

11. One simple technique for using any of these Grammatical Structure rhymes is to read the rhyme to the class and ask them to identify the verb tense employed. The rhyme "It's Raining, It's Pouring" uses two tenses (present continuous and simple past). The students must listen carefully to catch the two different tenses. Another possibility is to change the tenses in a rhyme that has already been presented and learned by the class. In other words, the class should be familiar with the rhyme as it is recited in one verb tense. When the rhyme is read with a different tense, the students must identify the new tense being used. Example: "It's Raining, It's Pouring":

"It was raining, it was pouring,
The old man was snoring.

He had jumped into bed,
And had bumped his head,
And hadn't been able to get up in the morning!"

(Note: Obviously, this example is for advanced students wanting practice in identifying complex verb tenses.)

-33-

CONVERSATIONAL EXCHANGES

Pronunciation, stress, intonation, grammatical structures and vocabulary are all essential parts of the ESL curriculum, as they are the mechanics of effective communication. But the students need additional help in mastering manipulation of these systems in the various situations they face outside the classroom. Two pieces of knowledge are indispensable in speaking effective and fluent English: knowing how to say something and knowing when to say it. These two things depend on several factors--the peculiar circumstances of the situation, where the student is, what type of personality he has, whom the student is with, what has just been said (what is he reacting to?), and what the student perceives his role in the culture to be. The response given in any occasion reflects the particulars of each of these elements. By responding with a specific kind of sentence, the student expresses his unique attitude. The ESL student, especially if he is a child, looks for help in learning how to choose the right kind of sentence to convey his special attitude.

Some of the different kinds of sentences in all languages are: statements, commands, requests, and questions. Each of these categories possess characteristic grammatical features. Commands may use the imperative mood, questions use inversion or a rising intonation. But the structure of a sentence does not always identify it as a certain kind of sentence. For example, "Why is that window open?" could be a command to close the window, or it could be a genuine question that wants an answer. The person who speaks the sentence knows which way he means it to be interpreted, and he conveys his purpose through the tone of his voice. Tone of voice is something non-native speakers of English must understand and learn how to control.

The students must learn how to convey their attitudes and purposes, how to signify whether a sentence is meant

as an imperative or as a request. Of course, choosing the appropriate vocabulary and structure is a large part of this process. The other component is tone of voice, and by this I mean the way in which a person modifies the quality, tempo, and pitch of his speech to express different qualities--anger, surprise, joy, fear, scorn, etc. This is distinctly different from intonation.

It is important that ESL students learn to sense what attitudes are conveyed by changes in the tone of voice. The rhymes I offer here as "Conversational Exchanges" are particularly suited for work on recognition of the various tones of voice.

In presenting these rhymes, the teacher can read one rhyme with a specific tone of voice and then contrast it with other tones used in familiar rhymes (those which have already been worked with in class). Or, the teacher can read the same rhyme more than once, altering the tone of voice for each reading to demonstrate how the attitudes conveyed also change when the tone of voice changes.

Along with rhymes which demonstrate conversational exchanges, I have included those which exhibit a command and request exchange, a demonstration (showing or describing how something looks or behaves), a general statement, a personal statement, or a more impersonal narrative. These different subdivisions each work well in teaching the children how to express their varied attitudes and purposes. Briefly:

- Demonstration rhymes contain language English speakers use when they are talking about something in the immediate environment, such as a picture, an object, or an event.
- General Statement rhymes contain language English speakers use when they are talking about things that are not part of the immediate environment, such as repetitive cycles and events ("this is the way the world is") or imaginary states of affairs.

- 37-
- Narrative rhymes contain language English speakers use when they are telling stories or impersonally describing events in the past.
 - Personal Statement rhymes contain language English speakers use when they are talking about themselves.

The teacher can manipulate these models of diverse kinds of language to illustrate to the children language behavior appropriate to various human encounters in which the children find themselves participants.

-36-

CONVERSATIONAL EXCHANGE RHYMES

COMMANDS AND REQUESTS:

"Two Little Birds Sitting on a Wall"

Two little birds
Sitting on a wall
One called Peter,
One called Paul.

Fly away Peter,
Fly away Paul.
Come back Peter,
Come back Paul.

"Polly Put the Kettle On"

Polly, put the kettle on,
Polly, put the kettle on,
Polly, put the kettle on,
We'll all have some tea.

Susie, take it off again,
Susie, take it off again,
Susie, take it off again,
We're all going away.

CONVERSATIONAL EXCHANGES:

"Sammy Thumb"

Sammy Thumb, Sammy Thumb,
Where are you?
Here I am! Here I am!
How do you do!

Peter Pointer, Peter Pointer,
Where are you?
Here I am! Here I am!
How do you do!

Bobby Big, Bobby Big,
Where are you?
Here I am! Here I am!
How do you do!

Ruby Ring, Ruby Ring,
Where are you?
Here I am! Here I am!
How do you do!

Tiny Tim, Tiny Tim,
Where are you?
Here I am! Here I am!
How do you do!

NATIONAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

"Where is Thumbkin?"

Where is Thumbkin?

Where is Thumbkin?

Here I am.

Here I am.

How are you today, sir?

Very well, thank you.

Run away.

Where is Pointer?

Where is Pointer?

Here I am.

Here I am.

How are you today, sir?

Very well, thank you.

Run away.

Where is Bigman?

Where is Bigman?

Here I am.

Here I am.

How are you today, sir?

Just fine, thank you.

Run away.

Where is Ringman?

Where is Ringman?

Here I am.

Here I am.

How are you today, sir?

Not very well, thank you.

Run away.

Where is Pinkie?

Where is Pinkie?

Here I am.

Here I am.

How are you today, sir?

Very well, thank you.

Run away.

CONVERSATIONAL EXCHANGES:

"Moo Cow Moo Cow"

Moo cow, moo cow
How do you do, cow?

Very well, thank you.
Moo, moo, moo.

DEMONSTRATIONS:

"This is the Great Big Indian Chief"

This is the great big Indian Chief.
This is his arrow and his bow.
This is his wigwam.
This is his flute.
And this is the way he sits, just so.

DEMONSTRATIONS:

"This is the Way"

This is the way we wash our face,
wash our face, wash our face,
This is the way we wash our face,
At seven o'clock in the morning.

This is the way we sweep the floor,
sweep the floor, sweep the floor,
This is the way we sweep the floor,
At ten o'clock in the morning.

This is the way we fix our lunch,
fix our lunch, fix our lunch,
This is the way we fix our lunch,
At twelve o'clock in the morning.

This is the way we wash the dishes,
wash the dishes, wash the dishes,
This is the way we wash the dishes,
At twelve o'clock in the morning.

This is the way we ride our bikes,
ride our bikes, ride our bikes,
This is the way we ride our bikes
At five o'clock in the evening.

Examples:

This is the way we help our mother

This is the way we go to sleep

This is the way we clean our rooms

This is the way we brush our teeth

etc.

GENERAL STATEMENTS:

"If All the Seas Were One Sea"

If all the seas were one sea,
What a great sea it would be!

And if all the trees were one tree,
What a great tree it would be!

And if this tree were to fall in the sea,
My! What a splash-splash there would be!

"Every Morning at Eight O'Clock"

Every morning at eight o'clock
You can hear the postman knock.

Up jumps Mary to open the door,
One letter, two letters, three letters, four!

"Spring is Showery"

Spring is showery, flowery, bowery.
Summer is hoppy, croppy, poppy.
Autumn is slippy, drippy, nippy.
Winter is breezy, sneezy, freezy.

NARRATIVES:

"Humpty Dumpty"

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall.
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.
All the king's horses
And all the king's men,
Couldn't put Humpty together again.

"Little Jack Horner"

Little Jack Horner
Sat in the corner,
Eating a Christmas pie.

He put in his thumb,
And pulled out a plum,
And said: What a good boy am I!

"There Was an Old Woman Who Lived in
a Shoe"

There was an old woman who lived in a shoe.
She had so many children,
She didn't know what to do.

She gave them some soup without any bread,
And smacked them all soundly,
And sent them to bed.

PERSONAL STATEMENTS:

"If Only I Had Plenty of Money"

If only I had plenty of money,
I'd buy you flowers
and I'd buy you some honey.

I'd buy you a boat and I'd buy you a sail,
I'd buy you a cat with a long bushy tail.

I'd buy you a church and I'd buy you a bell,
I'd buy you a ring and a bracelet as well.

I'd buy you the earth, I'd buy you the moon,
Oh, money, dear money, please come very soon!

"I Like to Skip"

I like to skip,
I like to jump,
I like to run about,
I like to play,
I like to sing,
I like to laugh and shout.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR PRACTICING AND DEVELOPING

MATERIAL IN THE CONVERSATIONAL EXCHANGE RHYMES AND SONGS

COMMAND AND REQUEST RHYMES:

1. Tone of voice is the most important element to be communicated through these rhymes. By his tone, the speaker indicates his attitude. For example, in the rhyme "Two Little Birds", several varying attitudes can be reflected by modulating the voice: a stern command, a cajoling invitation, a "I wish you'd go away" feeling, an eager anticipation, etc. A rhyme such as this one is ideal for illustrating the many different voice modulations in the English language. Because the structure and language is so simple, all attention is focused on understanding the emotion, or attitude, of the speaker.
2. "Polly Put the Kettle On" is a rhyme which also has a wide range of possible interpretations or readings. The speaker can sound thirsty, impatient, angry, etc. The lines of the rhyme can be delivered as polite requests or as severe commands. By mimicking the teacher, the students assimilate different tones of voices and come to understand when to use what tone and for what purpose.

CONVERSATIONAL EXCHANGE RHYMES:

3. The rhymes "Sammy Thumb" and "Where is Thumbkin" use the fingers of the children's hands. These are easy rhymes for the students to understand, and they give the children basic practice in common conversational questions and replies such as "How do you do", "How are you today?", and "Very well, thank you". The rhymes have two roles: the questioner and the "finger" who responds to the question. The students hold up the appropriate finger for each verse, as if the finger were a talking puppet. The teacher, or another student, or each student himself, can ask the questions: "Where is Thumbkin?" and "How are you?"; etc. The students reply "through" their fingers, as if the fingers were capable of answering for themselves. In the rhyme "Where is Thumbkin" the last line: "Run away" obviously suggests that the children lower the "talking finger" and hide it in their palms, as if it has run away.

DEMONSTRATION RHYMES:

4. These rhymes need pictures or props to be effective. With "This is the Great Big Indian Chief", a colorful picture of the chief sitting cross-legged with his arrow, bow, wigwam, and flute is quite good to have. With a picture like this, the students can make this rhyme into a true demonstration ("describing something in the immediate environment--a picture, an object, or an event").
5. Demonstration rhymes serve as patterns that the children can use to write their own descriptions of a picture, an object, or an event. They will need personalized attention--if not for help in choosing a topic idea, then for help in vocabulary. Each child should draw a picture to accompany his demonstration.

GENERAL STATEMENT RHYMES:

6. The students can write their own observations about the world following the structure of these General Statement rhymes. It should not matter that their compositions do not rhyme. Expression, content, and correct grammar are the elements that matter.
7. Using the rhyme "Every Morning at Eight O'Clock" as a model, the children can write about something that happens in their lives every day at a certain time. They will need individual help with their compositions.
8. "Spring is Showery" is an easier pattern for the children to follow. (There are no verbs to think of and to use, except "is".) The teacher can assign four topics such as the four seasons, or the students can think of their own. For the teacher who might ask her students to write their own rhymes modelled after "Spring is Showery", possible subjects are:

- school
- any sport (skiing, swimming, soccer)
- brothers and sisters
- mothers and fathers
- homework
- teachers
- vacations
- the United States
- their own country
- breakfast
- lunch
- dinner

9. These exercises mentioned above work better as homework assignments, because they can be difficult for the children, and the students need time to think about what they want to say.

NARRATIVE RHYMES:

10. Narratives are very short stories. I think it is worthwhile to introduce the children to the concept of the narrative and to ensure that they understand what a narrative does. This can be done by working with the narrative rhymes included in this collection. Again, pictures are indispensable in facilitating the children's understanding and in keeping their interest.
11. I also think it is worthwhile to ask the students to attempt a narrative of their own. Children have many imaginative story ideas locked in their minds. They will make vocabulary and grammar mistakes. These can be corrected by the teacher, and the finished, perfected result can be delivered to the class by the author. Once again, an accompanying picture should be drawn by the child for the presentation. The children's narratives should be no longer or more complex than "Humpty Dumpty" or "Little Jack Horner".

(Note: It seems obvious that such an assignment is designed for children who have been in ESL class for more than one year.)

-70-

PERSONAL STATEMENT RHYMES:

12. Like the other rhymes in this section, the Personal Statement rhymes offer examples for the children to follow in creating their own verse. I repeat that the first goal of the teacher who implements these rhymes in the ESL classroom is to make certain that the structure and the vocabulary are clearly presented and clearly understood by the students. If this goal is realized, the opportunity for manipulation of the material by the children can and should be provided by the teacher. Rhymes such as "I Like to Skip" and "If Only I Had Plenty of Money" invite the children to express their special and unique outlooks on the world.

13. To apply the rhyme "If Only I Had Plenty of Money" in the above-described manner, the teacher can ask each child to make a list of the things they would buy their friends or their family. Or, they can make a list of the items they would buy for themselves. Working with their list and with the structural frame of the rhyme, each child can rewrite the rhyme so that it becomes a statement of his personality and his values.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Frank Baber's Mother Goose Nursery Rhymes,
Crown Publishers, Inc., New York, 1976.
2. Holly Hobbie's Nursery Rhymes, Ottenheimer
Publisher, Inc., New York, 1977.
3. Marguerite de Angelis' Book of Nursery and Mother
Goose Rhymes, Doubleday and Company, Inc., New
York, 1953.
4. Mother Goose, The Classic Volland Edition,
edited by Eulalie O. Grover, Rand McNally and
Company, New York, 1971..
5. The Real Mother Goose, Rand McNally and Company,
Chicago, 1944.

