**ELA-Week 2**

Find an adult and ask them about their favourite nursery rhymes or skipping rhymes from their childhood. Do you recognize any of them? Maybe some are your favourites too.

These rhymes are often passed down over the years and can sometimes have words changed or even entire phrases. This happens naturally and it is amazing how similar they can be to those your grandparents and great grandparents grew up with. This kind of oral history is a primary source and can often give information about points in history at the time the rhymes were created.

For example, in the late 1990s, a study was done comparing the skipping rhymes and games played by children in Dublin, Ireland and those sung and played by the children in Miramichi, New Brunswick, where many are of Irish descent. Historians observed children at local schools playing at recess and recorded their skipping rhymes and games. The experiment was conducted due to the fact that it was noted that children in Ireland and children in Miramichi were singing the same rhymes and playing the same games.

These were so similar that some had exactly the same word choice or substitution as compared with other areas where the rhymes had changed drastically over the years. Why do you think the two groups of children were so similar in their choice of rhymes and games? Why do you think their word choice and phrases were also so similar? This may be due to the Irish left in their English after translating to English from their native Irish Gaelic language. Many Miramichi sayings were Irish first before being translated to English and often have a few words that only Miramichiers understand. This kind of community culture happens throughout the world and makes for interesting conversation when visiting a new places and learning the local dialect.

**Activity 1:** **Think about some of your favourite nursery rhymes or skipping rhymes. Now ask an adult if they can recite any of their own favourites. They may need to jump rope to help them remember! Here are some to get you started.**

**Read the following skipping rhymes and popular children’s rhymes out loud with an adult. Keep the rhythm of the rhyming pattern and recite it together or take turns.**

**Not Last Night but the Night Before**

Not last night but the night before,

Twenty-four robbers came knocking at my door,

This is what they said to me,

Lady, turn around, turn around, turn around,

Lady, touch the ground, touch the ground, touch the ground,

Lady, show your shoe, show your shoe, show your shoe  
Lady, that will do, that will do, that will do!

(A common variation is to say “the door” instead of “my door” which again may be due to the translation of “an doras” (Irish for “the door”) to indicate the phrase of a knock coming at “the” door) It is interesting to note these minor changes depending on who is reciting it, who taught them and how much time has passed. It seems that time and distance only slightly affected some of these popular rhymes as they were passed from one generation to the next. As well, the Miramichi version keeps the phrase “that will do” (meaning that is sufficient or an Irish reprimand when parents scold their children and say “enough of that” or “that will do of that”. Other versions in the last line, tell the lady to “skidoo” (a variation of skidaddle meaning to leave quickly) Which version does your grandmother, aunt, mother, cousins know?

**Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear**

Teddy bear, teddy bear,   
Turn around.   
Teddy bear, teddy bear,   
Touch the ground.   
Teddy bear, teddy bear,   
Show your shoe.   
Teddy bear, teddy bear,   
That will do.   
Teddy bear, teddy bear,   
Go upstairs.   
Teddy bear, teddy bear,   
Say your prayers.   
Teddy bear, teddy bear,   
Turn out the light.   
Teddy bear, teddy bear,   
Say good night.

**Cinderella Dressed in Yella**

Cinderella dressed in yella,   
Went downstairs to kiss a fella,   
Made a mistake and kissed a snake.   
How many doctors did it take   
1, 2, 3, . . . .

**My Mother and Your Mother**

My mother and your mother were hanging out clothes.

My mother gave your mother a sock in the nose.

What colour was the blood?

(Blue B-L-U-E!)

\*In addition to skipping, this rhyme was also used to pick who was “It” when playing Tag or Hide and Seek. Children would sit in a circle and one would recite the rhyme pointing at each person in the group until the last word was said. Each word was used for one person except the word “hang-ing” was counted as two people. The person who the last word fell on chose a colour and it was spelled out, leaving the last letter being the person who was “it”. Try this the next time you are choosing who is “it” for a game or who gets to go first in a game.

**Activity 2:** Here are some well-known children’s rhymes that you may know off by heart. Did you know that there were two more verses to Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star? Read the two rhymes out loud keeping the rhythm and rhyming patterns. Now it’s your turn! Can you rewrite the rhyme or add a verse of your own? Take your time to jot down words that rhyme to go with your ideas before writing. You may need to change phrases or sentences around to keep the rhythm of the rhyme. Or you may change the rhyme altogether and make it your own. Maybe you can change what Jack and Jill go up the hill to fetch and rhyme accordingly. If you change their names, try to follow the rhyming pattern to rhyme the second name with where they are going or what they are doing. Maybe you’d like to create a new verse or two to go with the original instead.

Jack and Jill went up the hill to fetch a pail of water.

Jack fell down and broke his crown and Jill came tumbling after.

(Example: Jack and **Jane** went up the **lane**to meet their good friend Jenny.

Jack was **slow** and stubbed his **toe** and now he can’t walk any.)

Twinkle, twinkle little star, how I wonder what you are.

Up above the world so high, like a diamond in the sky.

Twinkle, twinkle little star, how I wonder what you are!

When the blazing sun is gone, when he nothing shines upon,

Then you show your little light, Twinkle, twinkle, all the night.

Twinkle, twinkle, little star, How I wonder what you are!

Then the traveler in the dark, thanks you for your tiny spark;

He could not see which way to go,

If you did not twinkle so.

Twinkle, twinkle, little star, How I wonder what you are!

(Example: When the kids are all tucked **in**, you come shining with a **grin**,

All the critters rest their **heads**, laying in their forest **beds**.

Twinkle, twinkle, little star, How I wonder what you are!)

**Read your new rhyme to a family member and ask them to say it with you. You may want to create more of your own rhymes to share with friends!**