Preschool songs with lyrics you may print

Peabody blog · Teaching · updated 2026-10-30

Preschool songs with lyrics you may print and send home: what public domain means in 2026, the 41 rhymes and lullabies in Peabody's 52 themes, and why some are left out.

You may print the words of a song on a family note when the song is in the public domain. In the United States, works published in 1930 or earlier are in the public domain as of 2026, which covers most traditional nursery rhymes and many lullabies. Every song in Peabody's 52 preschool themes comes from Peabody's lists that print words only for public-domain songs. The planner puts the week's song and its words on the family note. Peabody is free through the end of 2026.

Most of us sing first and wonder later. Singing in the room is one thing. Printing the words on a sheet that goes home with twenty families is another, and that's where it helps to know which songs are free to print.

What public domain means for your room

A song in the public domain belongs to everyone. You may print its words on a family note, sing it at pickup, and change a verse to fit your theme.

In the US, works published in 1930 or earlier are in the public domain as of 2026. Traditional rhymes like "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" and "Old MacDonald Had a Farm" were sung long before that, and the guide on songs you can print has more on what that means for a classroom.

Two things to watch:

- A newer song may still be under copyright even if every child in America knows it.
- A newer arrangement of an old song can be under copyright even when the old words are not. Peabody's lists print the common traditional words, not anyone's arrangement, and they print words only. Tunes are not printed.

This is how we choose songs for our own pages, not legal advice. If your program has its own rules about printed material, they come first.

Where the songs come from

Each theme's song is from one of three Peabody lists, each with the words written out and, where it is known, who wrote them:

- Top 52 nursery rhymes with lyrics
- Top 20 lullabies with lyrics
- Top 10 clapping and hand-game rhymes

Some entries name a writer and a year, which is a quick way to see why a song is safe to print: "Mary Had a Little Lamb" (Sarah Josepha Hale, 1830), "Three Little Kittens" (Eliza Follen, 1843), "Brahms' Lullaby" (Johannes Brahms, 1868), "All Through the Night" (English words by Harold Boulton, 1884). Most others are marked "Traditional".

The songs that are listed without words

A few favorites appear on the lists without their words. The best-known 1939 version of "The Wheels on the Bus" is one: its copyright status is unclear, so the list links to it rather than printing it. "I'm a Little Teapot", also from 1939, is listed the same way.

You can still sing them in your room. The planner just never chooses them, and nothing of theirs goes on a family note.

The week's song, theme by theme

The 52 themes use 41 different songs. A few that fit their theme well:

- Theme: Farm · Song: Old MacDonald Had a Farm
- Theme: Space · Song: Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star
- Theme: Bugs · Song: Itsy Bitsy Spider
- Theme: Weather · Song: Rain, Rain, Go Away
- Theme: Transportation · Song: Row, Row, Row Your Boat
- Theme: Ocean, Boats, Beach and sand · Song: Rub-a-Dub-Dub
- Theme: Counting · Song: One, Two, Buckle My Shoe
- Theme: Community helpers · Song: The Muffin Man
- Theme: Pets · Song: Three Little Kittens
- Theme: Construction and tools · Song: London Bridge Is Falling Down
- Theme: Night and day · Song: Brahms' Lullaby
- Theme: Families · Song: Hush, Little Baby
- Theme: Friends and kindness, Gingerbread · Song: Pat-a-Cake
- Theme: Nursery rhymes, Rocks and dirt · Song: Humpty Dumpty

Every theme's page names its song, and the theme index has all 52.

How the words get home

Pick a theme in the theme planner and the song is part of the week. It prints in two places:

- The family note for the door: "Our song is…", with the words below, so families can sing it at home.
- The newsletter, if you switch on the song block in the newsletter maker.

On the wall plan, the song runs every day: learn it on Monday, sing it again on Tuesday, sing it with actions on Wednesday, again on Thursday, and on Friday sing it for the families.

Try this week

1. Open this week's theme and read the song's words once tonight. If you don't know the tune, ask a co-teacher or listen to a recording.
2. On Monday, sing the first verse only. You can always stop there; some older texts have a rough line further on, and the lists flag those.
3. Add one action on Wednesday: clap for "Pat-a-Cake", row for "Row, Row, Row Your Boat".
4. Hang the words by the door, so a parent can hum along at pickup.
5. On Friday, sing it for the families who are there.

Songs as signals

The same rhymes work for moving the day along, if you keep one song for one job. The transitions guide suggests "Row, Row, Row Your Boat", twice through, while scrubbing hands, "The Grand Old Duke of York" marching to the door, and "Brahms' Lullaby" or "All Through the Night" hummed at rest time. If the tidy-up song also means "sit down", it soon means nothing.

For circle time, the song is line four of five, right before the book. The circle time post has the whole script, and the books come from Peabody's free stories.

Three things providers ask

Can I print nursery rhyme lyrics for my class?

Yes, for rhymes in the public domain. In the US, that is works published in 1930 or earlier as of 2026, which covers most traditional nursery rhymes. Peabody's three lists print words only for public-domain songs.

Why isn't "The Wheels on the Bus" in the planner?

Its best-known version is from 1939 and its copyright status is unclear, so Peabody's list links to it without printing the words, and the planner never picks it. You can still sing it in your room.

Are the songs and the planner free?

Yes. The lists, the planner and the family note need no sign-in and show no ads, and Peabody is free through the end of 2026.

Free at peabody.kids/blog/preschool-songs-with-lyrics