

7.1 Action songs

LEVEL	All
AGE GROUP	A, B
TIME	10–20 minutes
AIMS	Linguistic: to associate actions with words, to internalize the sounds and rhythms of English. Other: to develop a sense of rhythm, to enjoy the music, to give the children a chance to 'let off steam'.
DESCRIPTION	The children do actions as they listen to and sing songs.
MATERIALS	Song cassette and cassette player, or music and a musical instrument.
PREPARATION	Listen to the song and practise doing the actions yourself.
IN CLASS	These are some general guidelines for doing action songs in class. 1 Play or sing the song once or twice with the children just listening, so that they begin to absorb the tune and rhythm. 2 Now play or sing the song again and get them to clap the rhythm and/or hum the tune to the music. 3 Get them to join in the actions with you. 4 Ask them if they can tell you what the song means from the actions. Explain anything they don't understand. 5 Play the song again. The children join in with the actions, and sing along with the words if they wish.
FOLLOW-UP 1	You can give older children the words of the song, perhaps with gaps to fill in, or to illustrate.
FOLLOW-UP 2	It is a good idea to get the children to make an ongoing song book to which they add new songs as they learn them.
COMMENTS	1 Listening and doing actions is the best way to exploit traditional songs where the words are often difficult to understand. The actions keep the children interested and give them a reason for listening. 2 The children may well want to sing the words too. This is fine if they want to, but do not force them if they are not ready.

EXAMPLES**Parts of the body***Head and shoulders, knees and toes* (traditional)

C

Head and shoul - ders, knees and toes, Knees and toes,

G

Head and shoul - ders, knees and toes, Knees and toes And

C F

eyes and ears and mouth and nose,

G⁷ C

Head and shoul - ders, knees and toes, Knees and toes.

Actions: the children touch the parts of the body in the song.

The Hokey Cokey (traditional)

The children stand in a big circle.

Verse

G

You put your *right hand in, Your *right hand out,

D⁷

In, out, in, out, Shake it all a-bout, You do the ho - key co - key, And you

G

turn a - round That's what it's all a - bout.

Chorus

G D⁷

Oh, the ho - key co - key Oh, the ho - key co - key

G D⁷ G

Oh, the ho - key co - key Knees bend, arms stretch, clap your hands.

Words

You put your *right hand in
 Your *right hand out
 In, out, in, out
 Shake it all about
 You do the hokey cokey
 And you turn around
 That's what it's all about.

Actions

Everyone puts their right hand into the circle
Everyone puts their right hand out of the circle
Everyone puts their right hand in and out
Everyone shakes their right hand vigorously
Everyone holds their elbows and moves their hips to the music
Everyone turns round on the spot
Everyone holds hands

*Chorus*

Oh, the hokey cokey
 Oh, the hokey cokey
 Oh, the hokey cokey
 Knees bend, arms stretch,
 clap your hands.

The whole circle moves into the centre
The whole circle moves out again
Everyone lets go of one another's hands
Do these actions.

*In other verses, substitute *left hand, right leg, left leg, whole self* (or other parts of the body). It is best not to let it go on too long, however.

Here we go round the mulberry bush (traditional)

Here we go round the mul - berry bush, The
 mul - berry bush, the mul - berry bush, Here we go round the
 mul - berry bush, On a cold and frost - y morn - ing.

Chorus

Here we go round the mulberry bush
 The mulberry bush, the mulberry bush
 Here we go round the mulberry bush
 On a cold and frosty morning.

Verse 1

This is the way we *clean our teeth
 *Clean our teeth, clean our teeth
 This is the way we *clean our teeth
 On a cold and frosty morning.