

English Folk Songs in the Model Music Curriculum



Selected resources curated by the
English Folk Dance and Song Society



English Folk Dance and Song Society

The English Folk Dance and Song Society (EFDSS) is England's national development organisation for folk music, dance and related arts, based at Cecil Sharp House, a dedicated folk arts centre and music venue, in Camden, North London. Cecil Sharp House is also home to EFDSS' Vaughan Williams Memorial Library (VWML), England's national folk music and dance archive, which provides free online access to thousands of searchable folk manuscripts and other materials.

EFDSS creates and delivers creative learning projects for children, young people, adults, and families at Cecil Sharp House, across London and around the country, often in partnership with other organisations, and runs the National Youth Folk Ensemble. Learning programmes draw on the diverse and vibrant traditional folk arts of Britain and beyond, focusing on song, music, dance, and related art forms such as storytelling, drama, and arts and crafts. www.efdss/education

About this resource

The Education team at the English Folk Dance and Song Society was very pleased to have contributed a selection of folk songs during the creation of the [Model Music Curriculum](#) which was published in March 2021.

This resource comprises a list of 24 English folk songs included in the Model Music Curriculum which appear in our online Resource Bank. The tables of songs – 8 each for Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 – are ordered according to Year and Key Stage. Each song is listed with a short description, title of the resource that includes it, the page number featuring the song, and a link to the relevant webpage of the Resource Bank.

The selection covers a range of different kinds of folk songs and topics – from sea shanties and work songs to narrative ballads and children's ditties. We hope you will find plenty of inspiration for your classes and that you will continue to explore the wider offer in our Resource Bank!

Note:

It is common practice to update the words of folk songs as times, communities, and situations change - so do feel free to adapt them to suit the young people and context in which you teach. It is also common practice to change the key in which they are sung to suit voices and accompaniment. The beauty of folk songs is their flexibility and communal ownership - so enjoy making these your own!

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This resource is freely downloadable from the EFDSS Resource Bank: www.efdss.org/resourcebank

Key Stage 1

Year	Song	Resource	Link
1	Acre of Land A traditional English folk song that features a number of impossible tasks that must be completed by the new farmer.	<i>Fun with Folk</i> (Includes audio recording)	https://www.efdss.org/efdss-education/resource-bank/beginners-guide/fun-with-folk#acre-of-land
1	My Shoes Are Made of Spanish A song about the fancy clothes and footwear someone wears.	<i>Essex Folk Song Discovery: Coastal Songs</i> (Page 8, includes audio recordings)	https://www.efdss.org/learning/resources/resources-listing/55-resources/learning-resources/6180-essex-folk-song-discovery-coastal-songs
2	Oliver Cromwell A nonsense song that tells the story of the apple tree that grew over Cromwell's grave.	<i>Essex Folk Song Discovery: Coastal Songs</i> (Page 28, includes audio recordings)	https://www.efdss.org/efdss-education/resource-bank/resources-and-teaching-tools/essex-folk-song-discovery-2-coastal-songs
2	The Old Woman Wrapped Up in a Blanket A song about an old woman who has gone to sweep cobwebs in the sky.	<i>Songs from the James Madison Carpenter Folk Collection</i> (Page 13, includes a video Introduction, and audio recordings)	https://www.efdss.org/efdss-education/resource-bank/resources-and-teaching-tools/songs-from-the-james-madison-carpenter-folk-collection
2	A Long Time Ago A sea shanty, sung to keep time for pulling ropes on board a ship.	<i>Sea Songs and Shanties Pack</i> (Page 17, includes audio recordings)	https://www.efdss.org/efdss-education/resource-bank/resources-and-teaching-tools/sea-songs-and-shanties-pack
2	The Herring Song A cumulative song about creative and silly ways to use various parts of this fish.	<i>Essex Folk Song Discovery: Coastal Songs</i> (Page 6, includes audio recordings)	https://www.efdss.org/learning/resources/resources-listing/55-resources/learning-resources/6180-essex-folk-song-discovery-coastal-songs
2	Hop Hop Hop A song about a gardener and ploughman discussing which of them is of greater value to society.	<i>Fun with Folk</i> (Includes an animated video, and audio recordings)	https://www.efdss.org/efdss-education/resource-bank/beginners-guide/fun-with-folk#hop-hop-hop1
2	Sally Jumped Over the Stars A simple song that was traditionally sung to a children's singing game and circle dance	<i>Songs from the James Madison Carpenter Folk Collection</i> (Page 6, includes a video Introduction, and audio recordings)	https://www.efdss.org/efdss-education/resource-bank/resources-and-teaching-tools/songs-from-the-james-madison-carpenter-folk-collection

Key Stage 2

Year	Song	Resource	Link
3	Adieu, Sweet Lovely Nancy A song from the point of view of a sailor who is about to go to sea and leave his true love behind.	<i>A Sailors Life: Unit 4, Long Distance Love</i> (Page 5)	https://www.efdss.org/efdss-education/resource-bank/resources-and-teaching-tools/a-sailors-life-ks1
4	Admiral Benbow This song tells the story of Admiral Benbow and how he died fighting the French in a naval battle in 1702.	<i>Essex Folk Song Discovery: Coastal Songs</i> (Page 12, includes audio recordings)	https://www.efdss.org/efdss-education/resource-bank/resources-and-teaching-tools/essex-folk-song-discovery-2-coastal-songs
4	Wassail Song This song would have been sung whilst wassailing, an old English tradition celebrated in the winter at the New Year around Twelfth Night, usually around the 6th of January.	<i>Songs from the James Madison Carpenter Folk Collection</i> (Page 16, includes a video introduction, and audio recordings)	https://www.efdss.org/efdss-education/resource-bank/resources-and-teaching-tools/songs-from-the-james-madison-carpenter-folk-collection
5	Leave Her, Johnny, Leave Her! A sea shanty that was sung towards the end of voyages and tells of leaving the ship and going ashore again.	<i>A Sailor's Life: Unit 3, Life Below Decks</i> (Page 4)	https://www.efdss.org/efdss-education/resource-bank/resources-and-teaching-tools/a-sailors-life-ks1
5	Hopping Down in Kent A song about seasonal workers working on farms in Kent to pick hops for brewing beer.	<i>Singing Histories – London</i> (Page 30, includes audio recordings)	https://www.efdss.org/learning/55-resources/learning-resources/2996-hopping-down-in-kent
6	The Codbanging Song A fishing song from Harwich in Essex	<i>Essex Folk Song Discovery: Coastal Songs</i> (Page 16, includes audio recordings)	https://www.efdss.org/efdss-education/resource-bank/resources-and-teaching-tools/essex-folk-song-discovery-2-coastal-songs
6	Bonnie Pit Laddie A song about working in the coal mines.	<i>Coal Mining with Folk Arts and Poetry</i> (Page 29, includes audio recordings)	https://www.efdss.org/efdss-education/resource-bank/resources-and-teaching-tools/coal-mining-with-folk-arts-and-poetry
6	Daddy Fox This song tells the story of a fox's trip to town to find food for his family	<i>Songs for Rural Life: accessibility and adaptability in SEN settings</i> (Page 15, includes audio recordings)	https://www.efdss.org/efdss-education/resource-bank/resources-and-teaching-tools/songs-of-rural-life

Key Stage 3

Year	Song	Resource	Link
7	Santiana A traditional sea shanty for keeping time whilst doing manual labour onboard a ship.	<i>Using Folk Song in Secondary Schools</i> (Page 5, includes audio recordings)	https://www.efdss.org/learning/resources/resources-listing/55-resources/learning-resources/2516-efdss-resource-bank-using-folk-song-in-secondary-schools
7	Wild and Wicked Youth A song telling the story of a young London man's life and the unfortunate consequences of his criminal activities.	<i>Using Folk Song in Secondary Schools</i> (Page 9, includes audio recordings)	https://www.efdss.org/learning/resources/resources-listing/55-resources/learning-resources/2516-efdss-resource-bank-using-folk-song-in-secondary-schools
7	Heave Away on the Trawl Warp A song about being a fisherman and working onboard a trawler.	<i>Essex Folk Song Discovery: Coastal Songs</i> (Page 20, includes audio recordings)	https://www.efdss.org/efdss-education/resource-bank/resources-and-teaching-tools/essex-folk-song-discovery-2-coastal-songs
8	Tarry Trousers A song about a woman who wishes to marry a sailor (wearing the traditional attire of 'tarry trousers'), but her mother forbids her.	<i>Essex Folk Song Discovery</i> (Page 20, includes audio recordings)	https://www.efdss.org/efdss-education/resource-bank/resources-and-teaching-tools/essex-folk-song-discovery
8	Bold Riley This is a traditional sea shanty which was popular among sailors in the Caribbean.	<i>A Sailor's Life KS2: Unit 5, Long Distance Love</i> (Page 8)	https://www.efdss.org/learning/resources/a-z/55-resources/learning-resources/4578-a-sailors-life
8	Ingatestone Hall A song about a well-to-do man who falls upon hard times.	<i>Essex Folk Song Discovery</i> (Page 6, includes audio recordings)	https://www.efdss.org/efdss-education/resource-bank/resources-and-teaching-tools/essex-folk-song-discovery
9	Tower of London (or the Female Drummer) Tells the story of a woman who pretends to be a man to join the army.	<i>Singing Histories: London</i> (Page 38)	https://www.efdss.org/learning/resources/resources/53-singing-histories-london/2983-singing-histories-london
9	What will we do if we have no money? A song about the hardships of the poor in London, from the repertoire of Irish Traveller singer Mary Delaney.	<i>Singing Histories: London</i> (Page 40, includes audio recordings)	https://www.efdss.org/efdss-education/resource-bank/resources-and-teaching-tools/what-will-we-do-if-we-have-got-no-money

Resource Bank

Inspire learning with folk

Explore free online materials for using English traditional folk song, music, dance, drama and other arts in your teaching and leading.



Discover more learning resources

www.efdss.org/resourcebank