

# Donna Rhodenizer's Camp Song Collection



- Have some end-of-the-year fun
- Give your students songs they will be able to sing around the campfire over the summer break
- Printed lyrics
- Printed vocal score (where applicable)
- Watch selected video samples to learn the songs
- Print this PDF download to use as a reference

## Donna Rhodenizer

Music education specialist

**RECORDING ARTIST**

**Performer**

**Composer**



Donna has been writing songs for young elementary-aged singers since the 1980s, with over 400 songs in her catalogue! She is intrigued by the world around her and delights in sharing her unique perspective writing songs that are catchy and capture the imagination of young singers. Her child-centered lyrics and musical stylings make her songs favourites with elementary students and young vocal students. The solid musicality of her writing makes her songs popular with music educators in elementary classrooms and private vocal studios.

Get songs from Donna Rhodenizer's Camp Song Collection at this link:

<https://donnaandandy.com/donna-rhodenizer-camp-song-collection/>

Visit Donna's Facebook page: [Elementary Music with Donna](#) to view over 400 videos on teaching strategies, repertoire suggestions, concert planning and more.

For Donna's original songs and classroom activities, go to:

[www.donnaandandy.com](http://www.donnaandandy.com)

**Camp Songs are a wonderful tool** for your students to access when they leave the music room and find themselves in a social setting where someone says, “Let’s sing something together!” Singing as a community can be great fun and might even be a catalyst for students to join an organized ensemble such as a choir in the future.

Singing in a social setting creates a feeling of unity and shared experience. Singing in the semi-dark, around a campfire can be reassuring for hesitant or self-conscious singers. It can be a bonding experience that is further cemented by the ambience of a crackling fire and maybe a marshmallow or two.

Camp songs come in a variety of categories:

- Songs with disgusting lyrics that make us say, “Eeuw”
- Call and Response / Echo songs
- Action Songs
- Sing-along Songs (story songs and songs that are just fun to sing)
- Canons / Rounds

All the songs in the above categories have a place around the campfire and can promote different aspects of singing.

**Songs with disgusting lyrics** are particularly useful if students are reticent to sing. Even students who have not sung a note all year long in the regular music class activities, suddenly find their voice when they are able to belt out a disgusting scenario from “Tom the Toad”. The students forget their inhibitions and they sing along as they laugh about the lyrics. Suddenly those students discover the joy of singing with others, they fit in, they are part of the group. It is magic. A bonus for this is their ability to have a song to suggest if they are ever at a campfire with their peers.



**Action songs** are good for laughing with fellow singers as everyone tries to match the actions with the word without getting all tangled up. Action songs also help with retention of the words as physical cues reinforce the lyrics that are being sung.

**Call and Response / Echo songs** are perfect if you have a musical leader who can remember the melody and all the words. With call and response built into the song, everyone is involved in the song, but there is no responsibility for remembering the words. In the early pioneering days when voyageurs were using waterways to transport goods to remote areas in Canada, the paddlers would sing to help them paddle together as a single functioning unit. One person in the crew was actually paid a bit more money for their ability to lead the singing and remember all the words!



**Sing-along songs** often tell a funny story, a tall tale, or are just silly. They create community as everyone joins in to tell the story and have some fun.

**Canons and rounds** are usually simple songs that can be passed around a circle of singers at the campfire. This is a fantastic way to hear multiple pitches in pleasing combinations and start learning how to sing in harmony. Rounds are often sung as the dying embers of the fire send their final sparks up into the starry night sky.



Teaching children camp songs is a great activity for the end of the school year. The main curriculum goals have been accomplished. Teachers are busy compiling assessments from the term and writing report cards and new concepts are not introduced in these last few weeks of school. It is time for review, and to have some fun using the music skills that have been developed over the school year. Camp songs are a great way to enjoy singing and provide a library of songs that children will be comfortable singing when they are out of the music room over the summer. Creating opportunities to develop independent singing is a gift. Students will think they are getting away with something as they sing these funny,

disgusting, and silly song. As music teachers, let's not tell them anything different, but let's just let them keep singing along!

On the other hand, there may be administrators or parents who question the validity of these camp songs in the educational setting. As your students leave the music room singing "Tom the Toad" and creating new verses (and we didn't even talk about the benefits of encouraging composing!!!) teachers are well advised to be prepared to explain their curriculum choices. A well-laid out yearly curriculum plan showing that the required concepts and skills have been covered and an explanation of the value of these songs (as outlined above) should be available for anyone who might need reassurance that curriculum has not been thrown out the window.

### **Donna's campfire song collection**

Over the years I have created a large file folder of camp songs from which I can draw each June when I do my camp song unit. It is interesting to me to see the songs that we used to sing that have now been "retired" due to language or inferences that are now deemed to be inappropriate. There are still lots from which to choose, and I have put together my favourites and the ones the students love the most. Even so, it is best to leave out any song (even from my collection of favourites) that raise concerns in whatever your personal circumstances may be. "When in doubt, leave it out" is probably a good motto.

In addition to singing camp songs, I have partnered with a grade 5 classroom teacher to create a "campfire" experience for the students. We have created a fake fire and sang our songs. Sometimes we make s'mores (if your students are able to eat graham crackers, chocolate and marshmallows and if you have access to a microwave at your "campsite") and sometimes there are skits. One particularly hot year we had sponges and buckets of water for a friendly water-sponge relay race. The students got completely soaked as they tried to transfer water from bucket to bucket by tossing the sponge down a relay line of people between the two buckets. The end result was lots of singing, lots of fun and great memories for the students.



*Happy camp song singing!*

# Songs in Donna Rhodenizer's Camp Song Collection:

## Songs with disgusting lyrics that make us say, "Eeuw"



Found a Peanut  
Herman the Worm  
Tom the Toad

## Call and Response / Echo songs

The Bear Song  
Boom Chicka Boom  
Going on a Lion Hunt  
The Moose Song



## Action Songs

Bim Bum  
Dum Dum Dada  
I'm Glad I am A Camper  
Waddle-ee Atcha



## Sing-along Songs (story songs and songs that are just fun to sing)

Banjo Song (My Old Banjo)  
The Chicken Song (I Had a Little Chicken Who Wouldn't Lay an Egg)  
The Fox  
Long-Legged Sailor  
Old MacDonald Mash-up  
Rattlin' Bog



## Canons/Rounds

A Ram Sam Sam  
Fire's Burning  
One Bottle o' Pop



## Bonus:

The Rooster Story (Mr. Stingyman) - participation story

**Art credits (in order of appearance):**

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**"Eeuw" face** Image by [Nina Garman](#) from [Pixabay](#)

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**"Canons and Rounds"** Image by [Clker-Free-Vector-Images](#) from [Pixabay](#)

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