

Step Back, Baby, Step Back

Name of Song or Rhyme

“Not last night, but the night before”

Singing Game

First line of song or rhyme (text only)

Song type

Use a checkmark (✓) or “X” in appropriate boxes

Melodic	Melodic/Cultural Analysis		Rhythmic/Uses Analysis		Rhythmic
M1. CSP	A	Source's Starting Pitch: A4			R1. Meter
M2. Scale	Childhood chant				R2. Metronome
M3. Toneset	m s (l)				R3. Note values
M4. Range	1 - 4		☐ Outer:	☐ Inner:	R4. Upbeat
M5. Mel. Form	A A _v		☐ Iso	☒ Hetero	R5. Rhy. Form
M6. Cadences	1 4				R6. Beats/phrase
M7. Intervals	m↑l (P4)		☒ Iso	☐ Bi	R7. Podia
			☐ Hetero	☐ Tetra	
M8. Target Phrases	A: l-s-m-s-l-m A _v : l-s-m-s-l		A: B:		R8. Target Phrases
M9. M. Diffic.					R9. R. Diffic.
M10. Other					R10. Other
Cultural					Classroom Use
C1. Context	Singing game		Actual Verses on Page 2	8	U1. # of verses
C2. Ethnicity	African-American				U2. Improv.
C3. Geographic	United States		“Twenty-Four Robbers”, Jimmie Lunceford and His Orchestra featuring James “Trummy” Young		U3. Listening
C4. Source: Where did this version come from?	Learned from Jonathan C. Rappaport, Kodaly Level I, July 2025.		Additional Room on Page 2 See page 2		U4. Game Directions/ Movement
C5. Source info	☒ Primary	☐ Secondary	☐ Tertiary	Call & Response	U5. Ped. Uses
C6. Research Notes	Additional Room on Page 2 Mr. Rappaport learned this from Keith Knighton, Boston, 1970s.		Homeowner		U6. Roles
C7. Holiday			Crime		U7. Themes



Not last night, but the night be-fore_ Step back, ba - by, step_ back.

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Stick Notation:



C6. Additional Research Notes

Bessie Jones taught this song at the Kodály Music Training Institute when she visited in 1973. The text seems to be based on the song “Twenty-Four Robbers”, written by Ted Buckner & James “Trummy” Young, first performed by Trummy Young & Jimmie Lunceford and His Orchestra in 1941.

U1. Additional Verses	U4. Game/Dance/Movement Instructions
1. Not last night, but the night before <i>Step back, baby, step back.</i>	Formation: two lines facing each other from about 10 feet distance between the lines.
2. Twenty-four robbers at my door <i>Step back, baby, step back.</i>	On “call” verses, the two lines go towards each other as described under “Action” below. On the “Step back, baby, step back” response phrases, the action is to go <u>backwards</u> and to “hop clap, hop clap, hop clap” on 3 beats.
3. Opened the door and let them in <i>Step back, baby, step back.</i>	1. Shake pointer finger to the beat (as walking 4 steps forward)
4. Hit ‘em on the head with a rollin’ pin <i>Step back, baby, step back.</i>	2. Knocking-on-the-door motion to the beat (as walking 4 steps forward)
5. I picked up my fryin’ pan <i>Step back, baby, step back.</i>	3. Opening door knob motion (as walking 4 steps forward)
6. Should ‘ave seen the way those robbers ran <i>Step back, baby, step back.</i>	4. Hitting motion to the beat (as walking 4 steps forward)
7. Some ran east and some ran west <i>Step back, baby, step back.</i>	5. Picking up motion (as walking 4 steps forward)
8. Some jumped over the cuckoo’s nest <i>Step back, baby, step back.</i>	6. Jogging motion (jog 7 steps forward)
	7. Circular motion with both hands, on the word “east” point thumb of right hand to right side, on “west” point thumb of left hand to left (jog 7 steps forward)
	8. Make large circle tracing nest near floor (as jumping forward 4 jumps)

