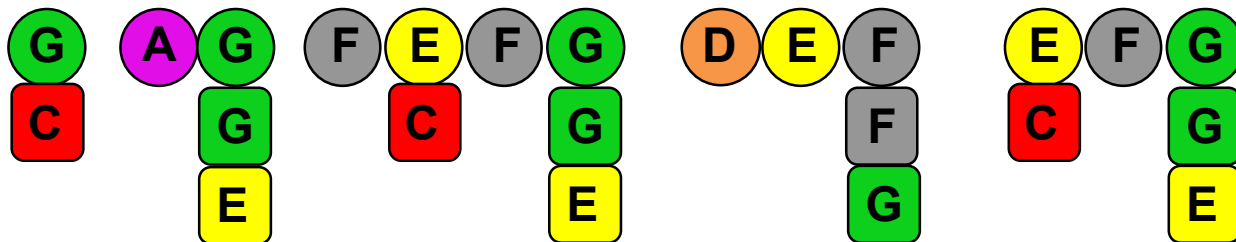
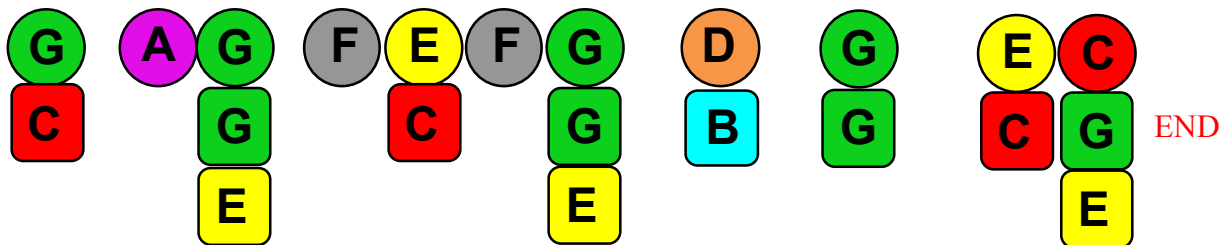


London Bridge Is Falling Down

START



London Bridge is falling down falling down falling down



London Bridge is falling down My fair lady

END

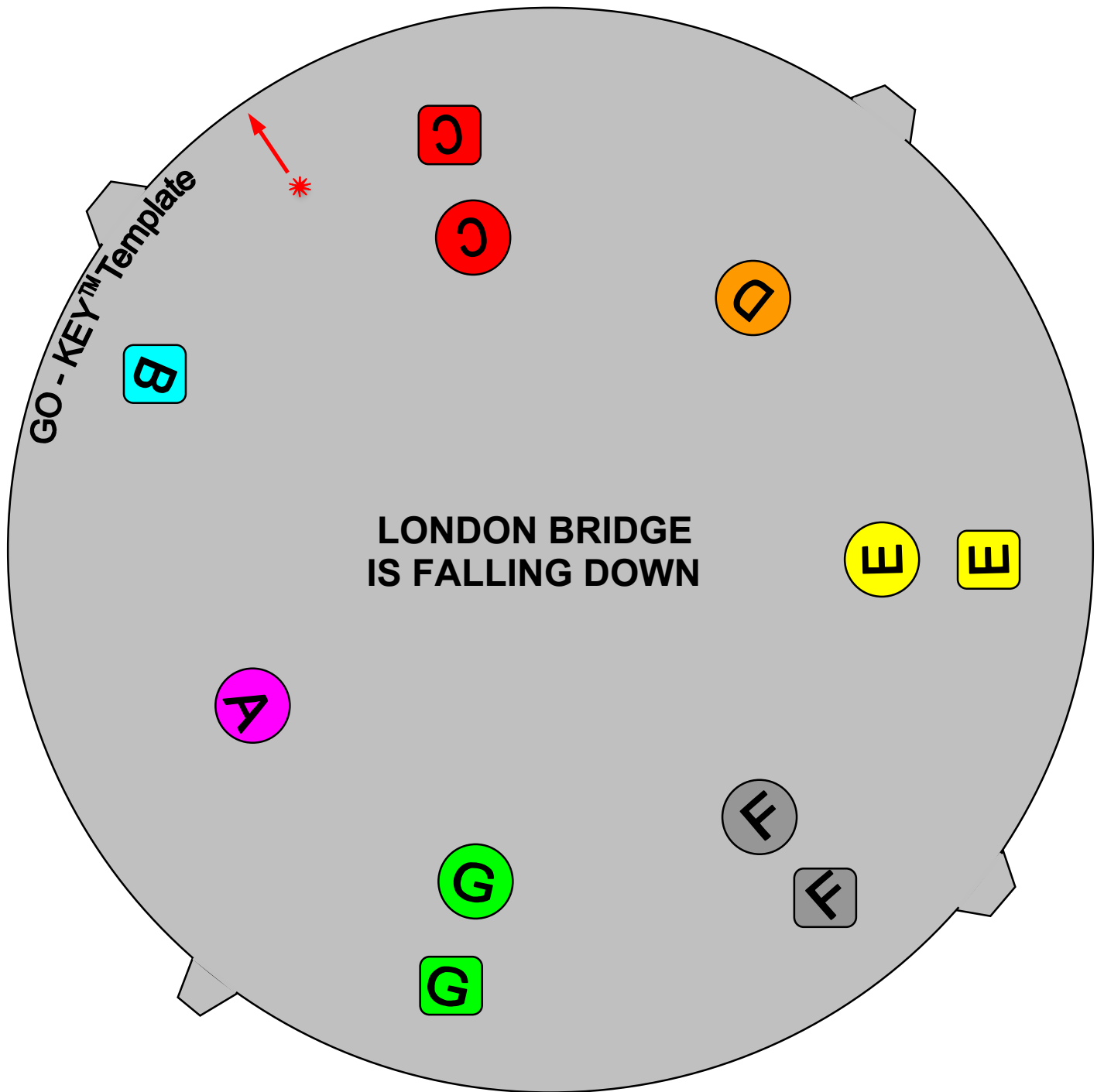
Lyrics:

London Bridge is falling down
 Falling down, falling down
 London Bridge is falling down
 My fair lady

Build it up with iron bars
 Iron bars, iron bars
 Build it up with iron bars
 My fair lady

Iron bars will bend and break
 Bend and break, bend and break
 Iron bars will bend and break
 My fair lady

Build it up with gold and silver
 Gold and silver, gold and silver
 Build it up with gold and silver
 My fair lady



History and Origin

Published c. 1744
Songwriter(s) Unknown

"London Bridge Is Falling Down" (also known as "My Fair Lady" or "London Bridge") is a traditional English nursery rhyme and singing game, which is found in different versions all over the world. It deals with the depredations of London Bridge and attempts, realistic or fanciful, to repair it. It may date back to bridge rhymes and games of the Late Middle Ages, but the earliest records of the rhyme in English are from the seventeenth century. The lyrics were first printed in close to their modern form in the mid-eighteenth century and became popular, particularly in Britain and the United States during the 19th century.

The modern melody was first recorded in the late nineteenth century and the game resembles arch games of the Middle Ages, but seems to have taken its modern form in the late nineteenth century. It has a Roud Folk Song Index number of 502. Several theories have been advanced to explain the meaning of the rhyme and the identity of the "fair lady" of the refrain. The rhyme is one of the best known in the world and has been referenced in a variety of works of literature and popular culture.

A melody is recorded for "London Bridge" in an edition of John Playford's *The Dancing Master* published in 1718, but it differs from the modern tune and no lyrics were given. An issue of *Blackwood's Magazine* in 1821 noted the rhyme as a being sung to the tune of "Nancy Dawson", now better known as "Nuts in May" and the same tune was given in Richard Thomson's *Chronicles of London Bridge* (1827).

Another tune was recorded in Samuel Arnold's *Juvenile Amusements* in 1797. E. F. Rimbault's *Nursery Rhymes* (1836) has the same first line, but then a different tune. The tune now associated with the rhyme was first recorded in 1879 in the US in A. H. Rosewig's *Illustrated National Songs and Games*.

The rhyme is often used in a children's singing game, which exists in a wide variety of forms, with additional verses. Most versions are similar to the actions used in the rhyme "Oranges and Lemons". The most common is that two players hold hands and make an arch with their arms while the others pass through in single file. The "arch" is then lowered at the song's end to "catch" a player. In the United States it is common for two teams of those that have been caught to engage in a tug of war. In England until the nineteenth century the song may have been accompanied by a circle dance, but arch games are known to have been common across late medieval Europe.

One of the earliest references to the rhyme in English is in the comedy *The London Chaunticlères*, printed in 1657, but probably written about 1636.

The earliest printed English version is in the oldest extant collection of nursery rhymes, *Tommy Thumb's Pretty Song Book*, printed by John Newbery in London (c. 1744).

A version is in James Ritson's *Gammer Gurton's Garland* (1784).

The meaning of the rhyme is not certain. It may simply relate to the many difficulties experienced in bridging the River Thames, but a number of alternative theories have been put forward.

More Recent Uses:

1922, It was used by T. S. Eliot at the climax of his poem *The Waste Land*.

1956, The final line of the verse was probably the inspiration for the title of Lerner and Loewe's musical *My Fair Lady*.

1963, Chorus of the Brenda Lee song *My Whole World is Falling Down* are based on "London Bridge is Falling Down".

1982, It was sampled as "Halloween Montage" by John Carpenter and Alan Howarth.

1993, It's in the movie *Falling Down* when unicorn in a glass plays "London Bridge is falling down".