

A pattern analysis of 'Three Blind Mice'

<http://topdrawer.aamt.edu.au/Patterns/Big-ideas/Patterns-are-everywhere/Knitting-and-nursery-rhymes>



Three blind mice. Three blind mice. See how they run. See how they
run. They all ran af- ter the far- mer's wife, who cut off their tails with a
car- ving knife, Did you e- ver see such a sight in your life, as three blind mice?

The words

The pattern in the words can be analysed as A1-A1-A2-A2-B1-B2-B3-A1, where:

- A1 = "Three blind mice"
- A2 = "See how they run"
- B1 = "They all ran after the farmer's wife"
- B2 = "who cut off their tails with a carving knife"
- B3 = "Did you ever see such a sight in your life"

A1 and A2 are similar in that they are both short and repeated. B1, B2 and B3 are similar in that they are all the same length (but longer than A1 and A2), show a similar (but not identical) rhythm, and rhyme (wife – knife – life).

The notes

The visual pattern in the notes can be analysed as C1-C1-C2-C2-D-D-D-C1, where:



C1 = 

C2 = 

D = 

C2 has the same falling pattern as C1, but it is higher and has a slightly different rhythm. The three repetitions of D are all slightly different in order to fit the words, but not different enough to warrant different numbering.



The music

When you sing the song, you will notice that it is rather static: it all revolves around four notes:



These notes form a major chord, a basic structure in Western music. (Play them on the piano, separately and then together, if you do not know this term.) Because of its structure, ‘Three Blind Mice’ can be easily sung as a round by four people or groups of people: One group starts at the beginning and repeats the song as often as they like. The second group also starts at the beginning but waits until the first group has sung ‘Three blind mice’ twice; and so on with the other two groups. Although the four groups are singing different music, it all fits together to make a pleasant harmonic whole. Try it!