

A
Year
With

Frog and Toad

TYA



Main Street Theater for Youth Study Guide
713-524-9196 MainStreetTheater.com

a year with **FROG AND TOAD**

TEACHERS

A Year with Frog and Toad will run approximately one hour, including a short talkback with the actors.

Have students write letters or draw pictures to the cast of *A Year with Frog and Toad* with their thoughts and comments on the production. All correspondence should be sent to:

SCHOOL BOOKINGS

Main Street's Theater for Youth
3400 Main Street #283
Houston, Texas 77002



Educational materials produced by
Philip Hays and Vivienne St. John

HOW SHOULD I PREPARE MY STUDENTS FOR A TRIP TO THE THEATER?

Read the book to your students or have them read it. The play is taken directly from the pages of the books!

Remind them that it can get very dark in the theater before the play and in between scenes.

Make sure your students use the restroom before they leave school or at the theater before the performance. It can be very dangerous to get up to use the restroom during the performance. In addition, you may miss your favorite part!

Talk about what kind of show they are coming to see. *A Year with Frog and Toad* is a live theatrical performance. There are five grown up actors who play all the parts and are very friendly. You should not be afraid.

Applaud! When the show finishes and the actors come on stage to take their bows, make sure to applaud for their hard work. If you like something during the show, it's OK to give a short round of applause, too. Be respectful! Everyone's attention should be on the actors on stage. To help with this, make sure not to talk to the people around you or kick the seat in front of you. Also, feel free to laugh if something is funny—the actors LOVE laughter.

After the performance, the actors will remain on stage and answer questions that the students may have. Discuss with your students what a question is. While the actors love to hear what a good time the students had or what part they like the best, they LOVE to answer questions about the show, the book or being an actor. Don't forget to raise your hand!

a year with FROG AND TOAD

BACKGROUND

A Year with Frog and Toad came to be because of Adrienne Lobel, Arnold Lobel's daughter. She asked professional composers Willie and Robert Reale to turn her father's books into a musical. She is a professional set designer in New York and designed the sets herself. She likes to tell this story about how the series of books came to be:

"My family and I were summering by a lake in Vermont. One day I came in from the woods with a small animal in the palm of my hand. "What a nice frog you have there," said my father. "This is not a frog," I replied. "This is a toad." And I explained all of the differences in appearance and lifestyle between these two amphibians. Not long after that, the first Frog and Toad book was born!"

*Adrienne Lobel,
as told to Children's
Theatre Company, MN*

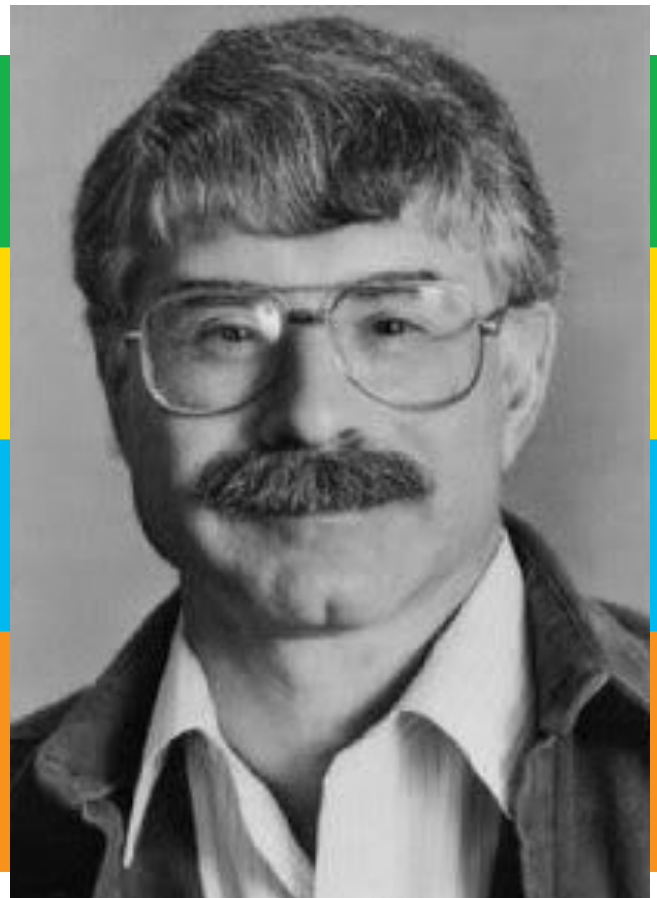


THE AUTHOR

Arnold Lobel wrote and/or illustrated over 70 children's books. He received the Caldecott award as well as two Caldecott honors, including one for *Frog and Toad are Friends*. He also received the Newbery Honor for *Frog and Toad Together*.

Mr. Lobel grew up in New York. He always thought of himself as an illustrator. About his writing he said, "I know how to draw pictures. With writing, I don't really know what I'm doing. It's very intuitive." Mr. Lobel was married to Anita whom he met at the Pratt Institute and had two children, Adrienne and Adam. He died on December 4, 1987 in New York.

Source: www.harpercollinschildrens.com



THE STORY

Frog and Toad are best friends. While in hibernation, they dream about each other and the adventures they have together. When they wake, or rather, when Frog wakes Toad, they plant seeds, go swimming, write letters, go on picnics, bake cookies, fly kites, rake leaves, tell stories and spend Christmas Eve together. They spend all of spring and summer together until winter comes around and they must go back in hibernation. When they say “goodnight” they promise to see each other again in the spring after their long nap.

These are the Frog and Toad stories, sorted by book, featured in the musical *A Year with Frog and Toad*:

Frog and Toad Are Friends
Spring • A Swim • The Letter

Frog and Toad Together
The Garden • Cookies

Frog and Toad All Year
Down the Hill • The Surprise • Christmas Eve

Days with Frog and Toad
The Kite • Shivers • Alone

CHARACTERS

The characters in the play are: Frog, Toad, Man Bird, Lady Bird 1, Lady Bird 2, Mouse, Snail, Turtle, Lizard, Squirrel 1, Squirrel 2, Young Frog, Father Frog, Mother Frog, Large and Terrible Frog, Mole 1, and Mole 2.

SETTING

The play takes place in and around Toad’s house and Frog’s house.



a year with FROG AND TOAD

DISCUSSION

Frog and Toad are best friends. Discuss with your students what *friendship* is. Have each student write a description about one of their friends in the class. Remind them that friends are nice to each other and their descriptions should be the nice things they see in each other – pretty, funny, smart. Then let each student share their description with the class. Make sure to include everyone!

Toad doesn't want to wake up until it's May. So Frog moves the *calendar* up to May (even though it's really April) so he'll wake up. Have your students make their own calendars. If they could choose their 6 favorite months of the year to "be awake" which ones would they choose?

A Year With Frog and Toad takes place over the course of one year in the lives of Frog and Toad. Discuss the four seasons of the year and their characteristics with your students, including weather and outdoor activities associated with each. Does it snow here in the winter? Do the leaves change colors and fall off the trees? Have your students draw a picture or write a story about their favorite season and their best memory of it.

The Birds open the show with the line, "We flew south for the winter." Discuss the migration of birds and why that is important so your students will understand what the Birds are referring to.

WRITING

Frog sings, "Sometimes the days, they can be very busy. So I like to stop and think now and then. I think of the reasons I have to be happy and that makes me happy all over again." Our lives are very busy, too! Students can benefit from a few moments of being alone and quiet and remembering what they are thankful for, what makes them happy, or just any thoughts that they may have.

1. Give students a few minutes to just sit and think quietly, as a positive moment rather than as a punishment.
2. Write a prompt up on the board such as "What makes you happy?" "What do you like best about yourself?" or, "What are you thankful for?"
3. Hand out a blank writing page for each student to answer the writing prompt. Younger students can also draw a picture. Continue to encourage the students to work alone and quietly.



SCIENCE

Have your students study frogs and toads to learn more about them. Did the characters in the show look like a frog and a toad? What did they do or wear that made you feel that way? Have your students do the activity below to learn about the life cycles of frogs and toads.

WHAT YOU NEED:

- tadpoles
(either scooped from a pond, or ordered from a pet store or pond supply company, or online at sites like www.livingaquatic.com)
- container for the tadpoles
(aquarium, fish bowl, plastic garbage bin)
- clean, fresh water
(if you use tap water, let it stand in the sunlight for 6 to 7 days to remove chlorine)
- frog and tadpole pellet food
- paper
- pencil

In about twelve weeks, your tadpoles will be full-fledged frogs. Congratulations! If you're not planning on keeping the adult frogs, release them into a pond... and while you're at it, you can even slip in a final lesson by talking about the food chain and the role your frogs will play in it.

WHAT YOU DO:

1. Place the tadpoles in a container.
Tadpoles like shade, so make sure you avoid sunny places like windowsills!
2. Feed the tadpoles according to the directions, usually a pinch of food every few days. If the water gets dirty fast, you're probably feeding them too much. Replace dirty water with fresh water, but do make sure you've removed chlorine first (see above).
3. Watch the tadpoles grow for the next 6-12 weeks. To record their growth, have the students draw a picture of them each week. Encourage him to make the drawing as detailed as possible. These critters may be small, but lots of changes are happening, and you should encourage the children to look very carefully—like a scientist! In particular, watch for when the tadpole starts getting close to developing legs; you'll need to give him a perch. It can be a branch or a pile of small stones.
4. Throughout this process, talk with your students about the life stages you're seeing together in the tadpoles. Using the weekly pictures of the tadpoles at different stages, you can discuss similarities and differences between stages, too... building skills in classification which will be relevant for years of science instruction ahead.

a year with FROG AND TOAD

SCIENCE

Toad decides to build a garden, but he has some interesting ideas on how he thinks his seeds will grow! Discover the process of growing a plant from a seed in this activity. You can even give the plant away as a gift.

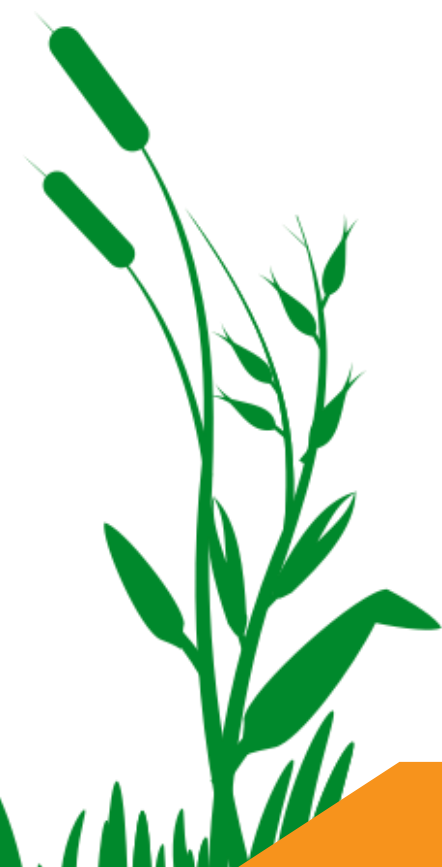


DAY 1

1. Each student will need a styrofoam cup or planting pot, a wooden tongue depressor, a marker, a spoon, and a few seeds.
2. Use a spoon to fill the styrofoam cup about halfway with soil.
3. Place the seeds in the center of the cup. Note: Read directions on the seed packets for best practices for planting, watering, and caring for the type of plant you are using.
4. Cover the seeds with more soil. Leave about a half inch of space between the soil and the top of the cup.
5. Pour a small amount of water from the watering can into the cup.
6. Write each students' name on a wooden tongue depressor. Stick the tongue depressor into the student's cup for identification.
7. Place the cups in a sunny location in the classroom.

DAY 2 AND BEYOND...

1. Over the next week or so, have the children water the seeds, watch, and write their observations in their notebooks.
2. Have students write about their experiences with planting seeds.



FROGS vs TOADS

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• have smooth, moist skin• have no warts on their bodies• have a narrower body and waist• live near or in water• have longer hind legs for hopping, and webbed hind feet for swimming• lay eggs in a massive lump of cloudy jelly | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• have rough, drier skin• have warts on their bodies• have a broader, flatter body• live on land and only breed in water• have shorter hind legs, with which they walk rather than hop• lay eggs that are long and stringy, wrapped around water plants |
|--|--|



FROGS are cold-blooded animals with long hind legs, a large head, short body, and no tail. Being an amphibian, a frog can live both in land and water. Some frogs may spend their entire life in water, while others may rarely venture away from land. Frogs are believed to have evolved from a tailed, four-limbed ancestor. As times changed, these ancestors gradually adapted to different situations, and the tail was found unnecessary and the hind legs lengthened.

Frogs live in a variety of habitats. Some spend their entire lives in the ponds and streams of the tropics, while others need little moisture to survive. Their habitats range from lowland tropics to high mountains and high latitudes, from very wet to dry conditions. The majority of frog species go through a tadpole stage after the eggs hatch. During that time, the swimming tadpoles require a substantial amount of water. For this reason, the desert-dwelling spadefoot toad only breeds when it rains, and the tadpole stage must be completed before the puddles from the rain dry up.

TOADS are amphibians closely related to frogs. Toads are mostly land-dwelling animals with a thick and warty skin. Although they still need moisture, it is generally much less than what frogs require. They are found in fields, gardens, woodlands, and meadows. Also unlike frogs, toads don't jump as much, instead making only short hops or "walking."

The only time that toads go in water is when they reproduce. Toads lay about 20,000 eggs at a time, with the giant toad laying up to 100,000. The tadpoles that are hatched transform into adults in a few weeks. There are exceptions, however. The *Nectophryne* species of toads lay their eggs on land and don't have a tadpole stage. The *Nectophrynoides* give birth to fully-formed small toads.

During colder periods of the year, toads hibernate for several months inside burrows. They use the projections on their hind feet to dig the burrows.

To ward off predators, toads secrete a poison from their skin. The glands which emit the poison are located all over the body, but are most concentrated around the neck. The thick, white poison can kill a predator. By inflating their bodies, toads make themselves harder to swallow for the predators.

Discuss with your students the differences between frogs and toads.

Which one would they want to be? Have them draw a picture of their favorite.

In the play A Year with Frog and Toad, the animals wear clothes and drink hot chocolate.

Have your students decide if and what their animals would wear and what they would do.

a year with **FROG AND TOAD**

MATHEMATICS

Toad makes cookies for Frog. Have your students make cookies at home. Send home this simple recipe for sugar cookies. Remind parents that students should make these cookies as much as possible by themselves. They should measure out all of the ingredients and arrange the dough on the cookie sheet.



TOAD'S SUGAR COOKIES

- 1 1/2 cups sugar
- 2/3 cup shortening or butter
- 2 eggs
- 2 tablespoons milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 3 1/4 cups flour
- 2 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

In a large bowl cream the shortening and the sugar. Add the eggs, extract, and milk. In a medium bowl mix the dry ingredients with a wire whisk. Add the dry ingredients to the large bowl. Mix with mixer until well combined. With hands, shape dough into a ball. Wrap with plastic wrap and refrigerate for 2 to 3 hours.

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Lightly grease cookie sheets. Roll half or 1/3 dough at a time, keep the rest refrigerated. For crisp cookies, roll dough, paper thin. For softer cookies, roll 1/8 " to 1/4" thick.

With floured cookie cutter, cut into shapes. Re-roll trimmings and cut.

Place cookies 1/2 inch apart on cookie sheets. Decorate. Bake 8 minutes or until very light brown. With pancake turner, remove cookies to racks; cool. Makes about 6 dozen cookies.

MATHEMATICS

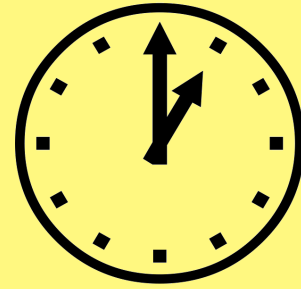
Toad never knows what time it is because his clock is broken. Have your students practice telling time on a clock with hands by making one of their very own!

WHAT YOU NEED:

green foam (two different shades of green), glue, black marker, paper plate, brad, pencil, scissors, construction paper, glitter glue

WHAT YOU DO:

1. Have the students draw a clover on a piece of dark green foam. It should be about 2" x 2".
2. Have them cut out the clover and then trace it 5 more times on the dark green foam, and 6 times on the light green foam. They now can cut out all of the pieces.
3. Help them arrange the cut out clovers to form the hour marks of a clock. The "12" will be at the top and the "6", will be directly across on the bottom.
4. 4. Once all of the clovers are in place, have them carefully glue them down.
5. They can then draw the correct numbers on each clover to create the face of the clock.
6. Draw out clock hands on the construction paper, a long one for the minutes and a short one for the hour. They should fit onto the face of the clock without extending over the edges. If they extend over, cut them down.
7. Stack the clock hands on top of each other and place them on the plate with the base of the hands in the center.
8. Help the students poke a hole through the base of the paper hands and the center of the paper plate.
9. 9. Have them push a brad through the hole and unfold it on the back of the plate to hold the clock hands in place.
10. Now they are ready to tell time!



TELLING TIME WITH FROG AND TOAD

Use the clock you made to help Frog and Toad tell the time!

#1

Toad plants a seed at 10:25 A.M. He goes back to check on it 30 minutes later. What time does he check on his seed?

#2

At 1:16 PM, Frog decides to write a very important letter to Toad. Snail wants to leave to deliver the letter at 2:00 P.M. How long does Frog have to write the letter?

#3

Frog and Toad watch the clock strike 12:00 A.M. on Christmas Day. They have been watching the clock for 37 minutes. What time did they start watching the clock?

#4

Toad was very worried when Frog was late to his house. He was supposed to arrive by 5:23 PM, but he arrived at 6:02. How many minutes late was Frog?

Now write your own word problem to help Frog and Toad tell the time!

a year with
FROG AND TOAD

ART

MAKE KITES

Make kites with your students using sticks, string and brown paper bags. Take them outside and see if they can get them to fly.

FEATHER PAINTING

Birds have a lot of feathers. Use feathers to paint a picture.

DRAWING

Have students draw a picture of their favorite character in the play or their favorite scene. MST would love to see them!

HEALTH

Frog and Toad lose control because the cookies taste so good. Discuss healthy eating with your students. Have them create a collage using old magazines of foods that are good to eat. Then, have them create a collage of snack foods that they like to eat that are not as healthy.

DANCE

During "Seeds," Toad decides that he will perform an interpretive dance for his seeds to encourage them to grow. Put your students into groups and have them create an interpretive dance to tell a story.

