

A Year with **Frog and Toad**

A Cardinal for Kids Study Guide

Based on stories by Arnold Lobel, ***A Year with Frog and Toad*** follows two great friends—the cheerful Frog and somewhat grumpy Toad—through four, fun-filled seasons. Waking from hibernation in the spring, Frog and Toad plant a garden, swim, rake leaves, go

sledding, and learn life lessons along the way. The two best friends celebrate and rejoice in the differences that make them unique and special. This charming, musical production with a jazzy and upbeat score portrays the story of a friendship that endures, weathering all seasons.

Study guide developed with assistance from Monroe County Public Library and Cardinal Stage Company Education Committee.

All illustrations © Arnold Lobel

To help students prepare for attending a live theater performance, check out our “What to Expect When You See a Play” information on the Library’s First Theater Experiences webpage:

<http://mcpl.info/childrens/first-theater-experiences>

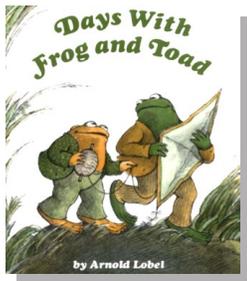


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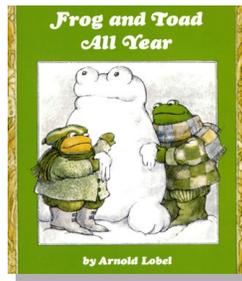
A Year with Frog and Toad

Read the Stories before you see the play

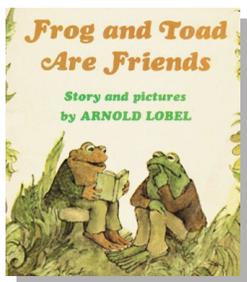
Ask your students to watch for events in the play, and to listen for things Frog and Toad say, that they remember reading in the books. Scenes from the play are found in four different Frog and Toad books:



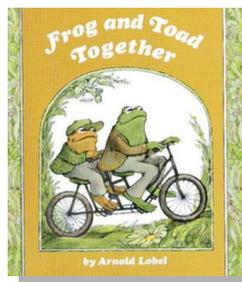
Stories from **Days with Frog and Toad:** *Alone, The Kite, Shivers*



Stories from **Frog and Toad All Year:** *The Surprise, Down the Hill, Christmas Eve*



Stories from **Frog and Toad are Friends:** *Spring, The Letter, The Swim*



Stories from **Frog and Toad Together:** *The Garden, Cookies*

Characters in the Play

In addition to Frog and Toad, other characters in the play include Snail, Mouse, Turtle, Lizard, and two Birds, Squirrels, Moles and Bees.

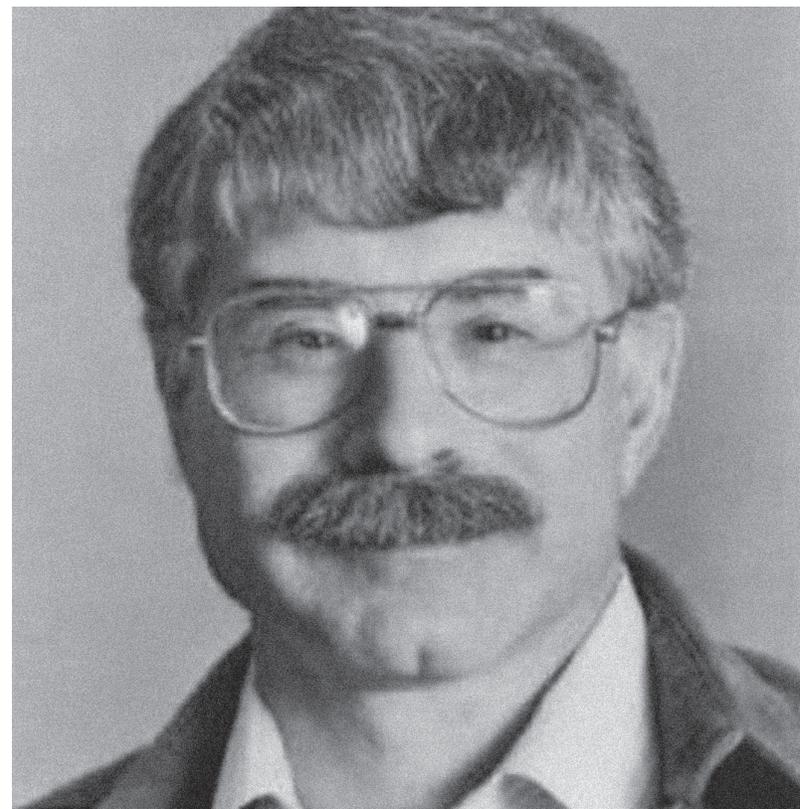
After the play, talk with students about these different types of animals. Which ones are reptiles? Which ones are amphibians? What are some differences between birds and mammals? What type of animal is a snail?

About the Author: Arnold Lobel (1933-1987)

Arnold always thought of himself as an artist. He did not intend to be a writer, but he went on to both write and/or illustrate more than 70 award-winning books for children. He won the Caldecott Medal in 1971 for his illustrations in the book *Frog and Toad are Friends*. He received the Newbery Medal in 1973 for writing the book *Frog and Toad Together*.

Arnold got ideas for the Frog and Toad stories during summer vacations to Vermont with his family. "During those summers," said Arnold, "my children caught many frogs and toads . . . I loved those little creatures and I think they led to the creation of my two most famous characters, Frog and Toad.

" . . . One of the secrets of writing good books for children is that you can't really write books for children; you must write books for yourself and about yourself. And somehow in the writing of the manuscript for Frog and Toad, I was, for the first time, able to write about myself. Frog and Toad are really two aspects of myself. If they have validity and truth it is because they are the validity and truth in myself."



About Frogs and Toads

**Frog and Toad have a lot in common
... just like real frogs and toads**

Frogs and toads are amphibians. The word amphibian means double life. Frogs and toads live two lives because they start their lives in the water as tadpoles. After developing lungs and growing legs, they can breathe air and move around on land.

Frogs and toads are cold-blooded—their body temperature changes with the air around them.

Frogs and toads are carnivores. They eat other animals, including a variety of insects, such as flies and ants, as well as spiders and worms. Some larger frogs and toads even eat mice.

**Frog and Toad are different ...
just like real frogs and toads**

Frogs ...

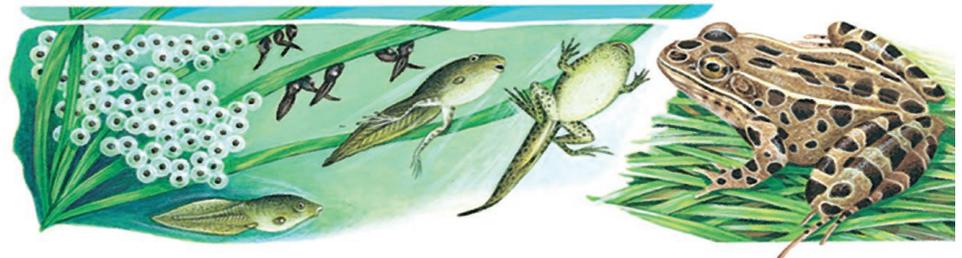
need to live near water
have smooth, moist skin
have a narrow body
have higher, rounder, bulgier eyes
have long hind legs
take long high jumps
have many predators
have teeth in their top jaw
lay eggs in clusters

Toads ...

do not need to live near water
have rough, dry, bumpy skin
have a wider body than frogs
have low, football shaped eyes
have short hind legs
run or take small hops rather than jump
do not have many predators
do not have teeth
lay eggs in chains



Images from World Book Online



A Year with **Frog and Toad**

**I cannot think
of any work
that could be
more agreeable
and fun than
making books
for children.**

– Arnold Lobel

A Year with **Frog and Toad**



World Book Online

World Book Online features articles on a wealth of topics, written at different reading levels for students in primary, secondary, and advanced grades. Articles can be translated into dozens of different languages. To learn more about real frogs and toads, use your Monroe County Public Library card to connect to World Book Online through the Library's website: <http://mcpl.info/school>

WATCH the World Book Online video, "What's the difference between a frog and a toad," featuring the Senior Zookeeper from Brookfield Zoo: <http://mcpl.info/Zki>

READ more about real frogs and toads by borrowing these books from Monroe County Public Library:

- *Frogs and Toads* edited by Shannon Beatty
- *Tell Me the Difference Between a Frog and a Toad* by Leigh Rockwood
- *The Life Cycle of a Frog* by Bobby Kalman
- *A Place for Frogs* by Melissa Stewart

LEARN about Indiana's frogs and toads with the Indiana Department of Natural Resources online: <http://www.in.gov/dnr/fishwild/3325.htm> and read about their Indiana wetland habitats in this brochure: https://www.in.gov/idem/files/wetlands_get_your_feet_wet_brochure.pdf

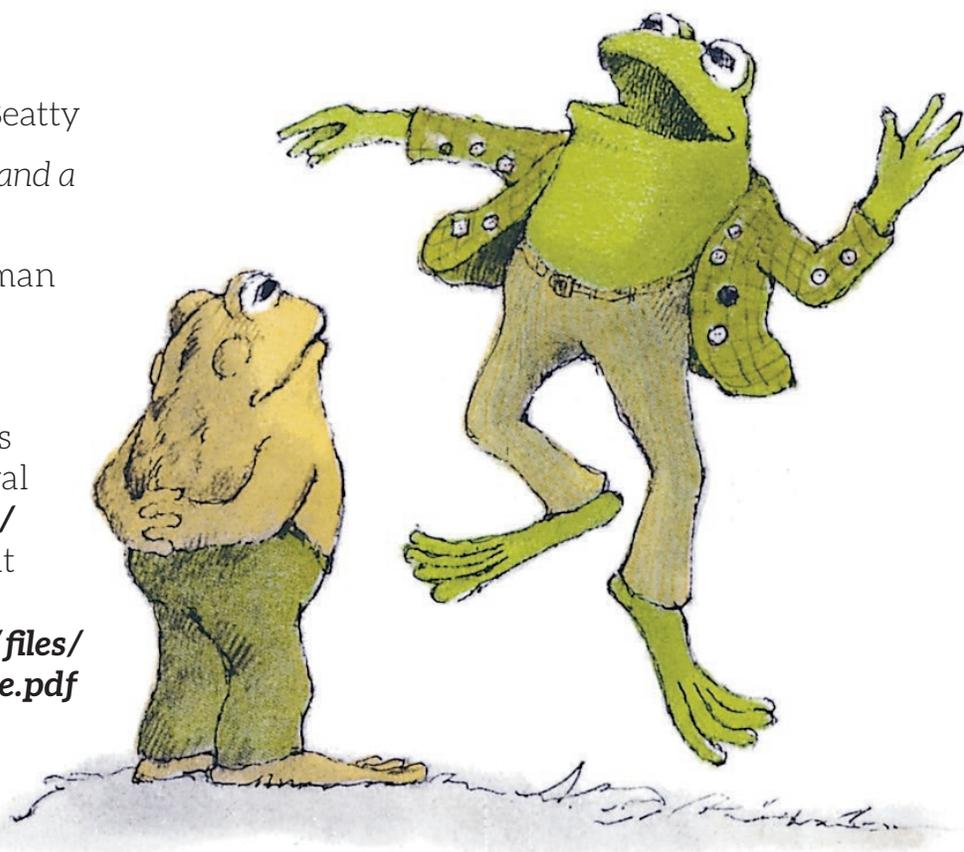


Lesson Plans and Discussion Questions

Find a variety of lesson plans and discussion questions for teaching with Frog and Toad stories on **TeachingBooks.net**, available through INSPIRE, a service of the Indiana State Library.

Connect to INSPIRE and other recommended resources through Monroe County Public Library's Online Resources webpage: <https://mcpl.info/library-resources>

Find printable activities relating to Frog and Toad stories on the HarperCollins Publishers website: <https://icanread.com/characters/frog-and-toad>



A Year with **Frog and Toad**

What do you do in winter?

When you're cold, do you stay in the same spot and put on extra clothes? Or do you move to a warmer place? Animals living in places with very cold temperatures—or during seasons when it is hard to find food—must have ways to survive. Some animals migrate to warmer climates. Others go into hibernation.

Hibernation

Hibernation is like a very deep sleep. It is a time of inactivity for the animal. During hibernation, an animal's temperature drops and its breathing and heart rate slow down. By slowing down its body, an animal is able to survive many months without eating very much food.

Frogs and toads prepare for hibernation by eating large amounts of food in the summer and fall to get their bodies fat. When winter comes, they look for a safe place to hibernate, such as under a pile of leaves, logs, or rocks. Some frogs dig a hole in the mud. When frogs are buried in the mud, they take in air through their skin instead of their lungs.

Lots of other animals, like bears and bats, hibernate too.

What is the longest amount of time you have ever slept at once? Gone without a snack?

Migration

At certain times of the year, some animals travel to another place in order to survive. This journey is called migration. Migration is an option for animals that can fly, walk, or swim long distances.

Birds make up the largest number of migrating animals and they travel the greatest distances. Butterflies, whales, and certain fish also migrate.

How do these animals know when and where to go? They pay attention to changes in their body and the world around them. Different animals have different methods for finding their way. Scientists are always studying and learning more about animal migration.

If you were migrating to escape the cold, where would you go?

Learn more about hibernation, migration, and other scientific topics by borrowing these books from Monroe County Public Library:

- *Tell Me Why Leaves Change Color* by Linda Crotta Brennan
- *Why Do Animals Hibernate?* by Michael Ulinski
- *Migration Nation: Animals on the Go from Coast to Coast* by Joanne O'Sullivan



Show What You Know

Use the words in the box to fill in this description about the play, *A Year with Frog and Toad*.

At the beginning of the play, the birds just returned from flying south for the winter. This is known as _____ . Frog and Toad, on the other hand, slept all winter. Frog and Toad _____ for the winter.

Frog and Toad are best friends. Frog and Toad are both _____. They do things together all year long. In the _____ they fly a kite in the wind. In the _____ they swim in the cool pond. In the _____ they rake the leaves. Then, in the _____ they go sledding.

winter

fall

migration

hibernated

amphibians

spring

summer

Think and Talk About How Friends Understand Each Other and Get Along

Define and Identify Character Traits

Choose a character trait from the list below. How do you describe these traits? Match each trait to either Frog or Toad or both. What do the characters say that makes you think they have this trait? What do they do that makes you think they have this trait?

Lazy	Cautious
Active	Silly
Serious	Caring
Persistent	Foolish
Forgiving	Fun
Grumpy	Selfish

Which character—Frog or Toad—would be a better friend to you? Why?

Act it Out

Read one of the Frog and Toad stories. What is a problem that Frog and Toad have in this story? How do they solve the problem? Recreate one of the stories you read and act it out.

Problem Solving

Choose a problem from the list below. Talk about, or act out, how Frog and Toad would solve the problem:

- Two friends want to play different games
- Two friends want different snacks

- Two friends want to use the same markers
- One friend hurts another friend's feelings
- Some friends are playing a game together, but one friend feels left out
- A friend does not have a place to sit at lunch

Communicating with a Friend

Have you ever written a letter to a friend or family member? How is writing a letter different from talking to your friend face to face, sending an email, or calling someone on the phone?

Try writing a letter to your friend or someone in your family to tell them something you like about them.

Create a Happiness Collage

In *A Year with Frog and Toad*, Frog takes some time to be alone and think of all the things that make him happy. What makes you happy? Create a collage of all the things that make you happy by drawing your own pictures or using pictures from magazines.

Hang the collages up in your classroom to remind you everyday of these wonderful things! Notice what things you have in common with other students in class. What things are different?

Talk with your classmates about the ways our friends help us feel happy.

Frog and Toad do lots of fun things together
during *A Year with Frog and Toad*.

Draw a picture of your favorite part of the play.

Display your picture at the Library! Simply bring your picture to
the Information Desk in the Children's area at Monroe County Public
Library and the Librarians will hang it in a special gallery.

A Year with **Frog and Toad**

If You Like *Frog and Toad* Stories by Arnold Lobel . . .

try these other early-reader books about friendship.

The following books are in the Early Reader collection at Monroe County Public Library. Librarians can help you choose books that are right for you!

Hi! Fly Guy

by Tedd Arnold (J-ER Arn)

When Buzz captures a fly to enter in The Amazing Pet Show, his parents and the judges tell him that a fly cannot be a pet, but Fly Guy proves them wrong.

Rabbit and Robot: The Sleepover

by Cece Bell (J-ER Bel)

Rabbit is excited about the sleepover he has carefully planned for his friend Robot, but Robot has some different ideas about how things should go.

Frog and Friends

by Eve Bunting (J-ER Bun)

Frog and his friends are alarmed by a strange object that appears on his pond, share a thoughtful—if scratchy—gift, and meet a hippopotamus that has run away from the zoo.

Cork and Fuzz

by Dori Chaconas (J-ER Cha)

A possum and a muskrat become friends despite their many differences.

Pete the Cat: A Pet for Pete

by James Dean (J-ER Pete Dea)

Garnering attention after painting a picture of his new pet goldfish, Pete the cat receives so many requests to make paintings for his neighbors that he devises an uproarious solution.

Hot Rod Hamster and the Wacky Whatever Race

by Cynthia Lord (J-ER Lor)

Hot Rod Hamster enlists the help of his friend Dog to build a super sleek soap box racer for the Wacky Whatever Race.

What is an Early Reader Book?

Teacher and Geisel Award committee member Robin Smith states that a beginning or early reader book should have the following characteristics:

- The font is usually clear and readable, so the eye easily knows where to go next.
- The vocabulary is generally limited to words that are sight words or can be decoded easily using the rules of phonics.
- Sentences tend to be simple and do not extend over a page turn.
- The book should appeal to new readers who are about five to eight years old.
- The illustrations . . . reflect the text, help give clues about harder words, and tell the story.



A Year with **Frog and Toad**

Fox and His Friends

by Edward Marshall
(J-ER Mar)

In three separate episodes Fox wants to play with his friends, but duty in one form or another interferes.

George and Martha

by James Marshall
(J-ER Mar)

Relates two episodes in the friendship of two hippopotamuses.

Pearl and Wagner: Two Good Friends

by Kate McMullen
(J-ER McM)

Pearl and Wagner, a rabbit and a mouse, work together to build a robot for their science project.

Henry and Mudge: The First Book of Their Adventures

by Cynthia Rylant (J-ER Ryl)

Henry, feeling lonely on a street without any other children, finds companionship and love in a big dog named Mudge.

Monkey and Elephant

by Carole Schaefer (J-ER Sch)

In three episodes two friends cool off on a hot day, sing songs, and outsmart some riffraff wildcats.

Mac and Cheese

by Sarah Weeks (J-ER Wee)

Two cats who are as different as night and day are nevertheless best friends.

New Pig in Town

by Lisa Wheeler (J-ER Wh)

Fitch the wolf and Chip the pig strike up an unlikely friendship because they discover something in common.

Cat the Cat, Who is That

by Mo Willems (J-ER Wil)

An exuberant cat introduces readers to her friends.

Upstairs Mouse, Downstairs Mole

by Wong Yee (J-ER Yee)

Mouse and his downstairs neighbor, Mole, discover that when they help each other, housecleaning and other daily tasks are much easier.

