

ABOUT THE AUTHOR, ARNOLD LOBEL

During his distinguished career, **Arnold Lobel** wrote and/or illustrated over 70 books for children. Mr. Lobel's notable achievements in illustration include *Fables* (1981), for which he was awarded the Caldecott Medal, and two Caldecott Honor Books—his own *Frog and Toad Are Friends* (1971) and *Hildilid's Night* by Cheli Duran Ryan (1972). Mr. Lobel also received recognition for his writing; his book *Frog and Toad Together* (1973) was selected as a Newberry Honor Book.



Photo courtesy of worklightproductions.com

In addition to the *Frog and Toad* books, *Owl at Home*, *Mouse Tales*, *The Book of Pigericks*, and many other popular books he created, Mr. Lobel also illustrated other writers' texts that captured his fancy. He viewed this as "something different and challenging." In 1977 Mr. Lobel and his wife, Anita, a distinguished children's book author and artist in her own right, collaborated on their first book, *How the Rooster Saved the Day*, chosen by School Library Journal as one of the Best Books of the Year in 1977. They collaborated on three more books—*A Treeful of Pigs*, a 1979 ALA Notable Book; *On Market Street*, a 1982 Caldecott Honor Book; and *The Rose in My Garden*, a 1984 Boston Globe/Horn Book Honor Book. Arnold Lobel died in 1987.

THE CREATORS OF THE MUSICAL

A Year With Frog and Toad was developed for the stage by Arnold Lobel's daughter, **Adrienne Lobel**. A scenery designer for theater, opera, and dance, Ms. Lobel's Broadway credits include *A Year with Frog and Toad*, *On the Town*, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, and *Passion*. Ms. Lobel has also designed for The American Repertory Theater, Arena Stage, The Guthrie Theater, The Mitzi Newhouse Theater at Lincoln Center, The New York Shakespeare Festival, and The Second Stage Company.

The book and lyrics for *A Year With Frog and Toad* were created by **Willie Reale**. A freelance writer, Willie has written such musicals as *Once Around the City* and *Quark Victory* and has worked on television dramas including *Homicide: Life on the Streets* and *Deadline*. In 1981, Willie founded the 52nd Street Project, an organization that connects inner-city children with professional theater artists to create theater. During his 18 years as the Project's artistic director, Willie produced hundreds of plays and created *The Kid Theater Kit*, a how-to manual of the Project's programs that includes many plays and song lyrics.

Robert Reale has composed for musicals, plays, film, and television. Robert collaborated with his brother on *A Year With Frog and Toad*, *Once Around the City*, and *Quark Victory*, and his other theater credits include *Richard Dressing's Rounding Third*, *Diva*, and *Salvation Moon*. His film credits include *Ten-13*, *Wigstock*, and *The Victim*, and he has written music for television shows such as *Inside Edition*, *20/20*, and *Out There*.

A Year With Frog and Toad premiered at the Children's Theater Company in Minneapolis, MN and then at the New Victory Theatre in New York, and the Cort Theater on Broadway. Willie Reale received two Tony nominations for the musical's book and lyrics, and Robert Reale received a Tony nomination for the music.

PAGE TO STAGE CONNECTIONS

Below 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

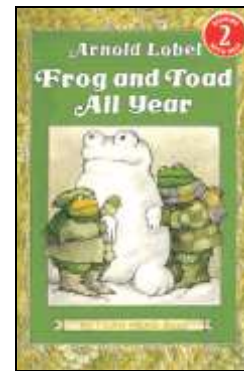
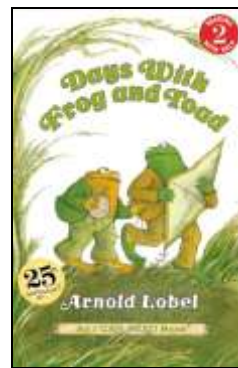
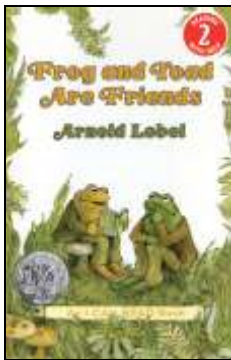
- *The Garden*
- *Cookies*

Frog and Toad All Year

- *Down the Hill*
- *The Surprise*
- *Christmas Eve*

Days With Frog and Toad

- *The Kite*
- *Shivers*
- *Alone*



Below is a list of songs from the show and the stories that they represent. Use this list to select stories to read with your class before coming to the show.

<u>Song</u>	<u>Story</u>	<u>Book</u>
"Spring"	<i>Spring</i>	<i>Frog and Toad Are Friends</i>
"Seeds"	<i>The Garden</i>	<i>Frog and Toad Together</i>
"The Letter #1"	<i>The Letter</i>	<i>Frog and Toad are Friends</i>
"Getta Loada Toad"	<i>A Swim</i>	<i>Frog and Toad are Friends</i>
"Alone"	<i>Alone</i>	<i>Days With Frog and Toad</i>
"Cookies"	<i>Cookies</i>	<i>Frog and Toad Together</i>
"The Kite"	<i>The Kite</i>	<i>Days With Frog and Toad</i>
"He'll Never Know"	<i>The Surprise</i>	<i>Frog and Toad All Year</i>
"Shivers"	<i>Shivers</i>	<i>Days With Frog and Toad</i>
"Down the Hill"	<i>Down the Hill</i>	<i>Frog and Toad All Year</i>
"Toad to the Rescue"	<i>Christmas Eve</i>	<i>Frog and Toad All Year</i>
"Merry Almost Christmas"	<i>Christmas Eve</i>	<i>Frog and Toad All Year</i>

There are two songs in the show that do not correspond directly to a specific story in one of the *Frog and Toad* books. The song "A Year With Frog and Toad" serves as a narrative device for the musical and is sung by the Birds. It prepares the audience for what they are about to see and introduces the main characters of Frog and Toad. The song returns twice, accompanying the migration of the Birds and showing the passing of seasons. The second song not directly tied to the books is "I'm Coming Out of My Shell," sung by Snail. The song expresses Snail's pride in delivering Frog's letter to Toad.

PRE-SHOW ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION

1. Get a copy of each of the *Frog and Toad* books: *Frog and Toad Are Friends*, *Frog and Toad Together*, *Frog and Toad All Year*, and *Days with Frog and Toad*. Read the stories aloud in class or have students read them to become familiar with the characters and the events in the show.

2. *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, including the weather and outdoor activities associated with each season. Have students compare the seasons in your region to those in other parts of the country.

3. Although there are no human characters in *A Year With Frog and Toad*, human actors and actresses play the roles of the animals. Have students brainstorm the ways in which the actors will represent the animals. Encourage your students to consider all aspects of theatrical performances, including costumes, vocal quality, gestures, movements, etc.



Frog and Toad in *A Year With Frog & Toad*.

4. The Birds open the show with the line, “We flew south for the winter.” Discuss the migration of birds, including why and how it occurs.

5. After Snail finally delivers Frog’s letter to Toad, he is very happy and proud of himself. He sings a song called, “I’m Coming Out of My Shell,” announcing how outgoing he has become. Explain this expression to your students and ask them to share times when they have “come out of their shells.”



The cast of *A Year With Frog and Toad*.

POST-SHOW CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Science

1. Toad decides that he wants to plant a garden in the spring. He is very impatient with his seed and tries many things to make them grow. They finally begin to grow but not because of his crazy techniques. Collect potting soil, paper cups, and seeds that can be grown in your classroom. Have each student plant his or her own seeds in a cup and care for them with daily watering. Once the plants have grown, let the students replant them into larger pots in the classroom or take them home.

National Standards for Science: Content Standards 3 & 4

2. All of the characters in *A Year With Frog and Toad* are animals, but they were portrayed by human actors and actresses on the stage. Have your students brainstorm the human characteristics that were given to the animals for the show. Then help your students research the actual characteristics of the animals (frogs, toads, birds, turtles, mice, lizards, moles, squirrels, and snails) in the musical and the stories. Focus on the behaviors that the students saw in the show (eating habits, habitat, migration, hibernation, movement, etc.). Compare and contrast between the animals' fictitious characteristics and their actual characteristics.

National Standards for Science: Content Standards 1 & 3

Health

Frog and Toad lose control because the cookies taste so good. However, this is not a very healthy idea. Discuss good eating habits with your students and have them create a collage of healthy foods by drawing or collecting pictures of various food items. Then have them create a collage of unhealthy snack foods that they like to eat. Make a chart of how much healthy food they should eat in relation to snack food and talk about healthy food choices and eating habits.

National Standards for Health: Content Standards 1, 3 & 6



"Cookies" in *A Year With Frog and Toad*.

Technology

In the past, writing and sending letters by messenger, like Frog does by asking Snail to deliver his letter, was the only means for sending news to someone. Various inventions over the years have made it possible to send news more quickly in both written and verbal form. Have students brainstorm the different ways that people use to get information to each other.

National Standards for Technology: Content Stands 1 & 4

POST-SHOW CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS, cont.

Mathematics

Toad never knows what time it is because his clock is broken. Have your students practice telling time on a clock with hands. Draw five blank clocks (circles with lines or the numbers 1-12 for each of the hours). Write the following times under the blank clocks (one for each): 1:00, 5:45, 8:10, 9:30, 11:20. Have your students draw the hands on each clock to represent the time. Now place the students in pairs to play a time game. Have them draw blank clocks and give each other times to draw on the clocks or draw the hands on the clocks first and then write the times.

National Standards for Mathematics: Measurement

Social Sciences/Geography

Climates throughout the country vary by region. Have your students find your city and state on a map. Discuss whether or not your area has the same climate as the one Frog and Toad live in. Identify other cities, states, or regions in the United States that students think have the same climate as your city. Then select and discuss places that have climates different from yours.

National Standards for Social Sciences: Geography
Standards 1 & 2



Frog from *A Year With Frog and Toad*.

English/Language Arts

1. Frog writes a friendly letter to Toad to cheer him up. Have your students think about a friend or family member who would like to receive a letter from them. Students can then write a letter and deliver it to them or get help mailing it if the person lives far away.

National Standards for Language Arts: Content Standards 4, 5 & 12

2. Have students read other books by Arnold Lobel, especially those in the *I Can Read* series. Have them discuss how they are similar to the Frog and Toad books and how they are different.

National Standards for Language Arts: Content Standards 1 & 3

3. After your students have seen the production and all of the fun activities that Frog and Toad do together throughout the year have them create their own story about friendship. Ask them to think about a favorite activity they have participated in with a friend or sibling and write a story about the experience.

National Standards for Language Arts: Content Standards 6 & 12

A Year With Frog and Toad Curriculum Guide
Civic Center of Greater Des Moines
February 2010

POST-SHOW CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS, cont.

Theater

Collect a number of costume pieces and have your students recreate some of the characters and scenes they saw in the show or create new scenes based on other *Frog and Toad* stories not included in the musical.

National Standards for Theater: Content Standards 1 & 2

Encourage each student who saw the production to take five minutes to think about the thoughts and feelings that the show inspired in them. Have students artistically express these feelings in a poem, picture, story, or letter. Let them choose whichever form of expression they feel will best represent their individual experience. Encourage them to share these reflections with the other students in their class.

National Standards for Theater: Content Standard 8

Visual Arts

A Year With Frog and Toad covers all four seasons of the year. Use this as the inspiration for a visual art project. Have students create a work of art that shows the four seasons. Allow them to experiment with different media (paint, drawing, collage, yarn, paper, etc.). Students can decide on a method for dividing the “canvas” and representing each season through color, texture, and/or visual elements.

National Standard for Visual Arts: Content Standards 1, 2 & 3

Dance

During the song “Seeds,” Toad decides that he will perform an interpretive dance to encourage his seeds to grow. Give your students the motivation to create an interpretive dance. The objective of the dance could be to tell a story, to convince you that they can have recess, or anything else that will inspire them. Once the students understand the goal, remind them to pay attention to the composition of the dance, making sure it has a beginning, middle, and end. Individuals or small groups can create dances.

National Standards for Dance: Content Standards 1, 2 & 3



Scene from *A Year With Frog and Toad*.

VOCABULARY

adieu: French for farewell or goodbye

aghast: shocked and amazed

agog: eager and excited

bamboo shoot: the hard, woody stems of the bamboo plant—a tall tropical grass.

chew the fat: to chat, have a lengthy talk

dusky: somewhat dark

escargot: an edible snail dish, often served as an appetizer before a meal

exhausting: very tiring

fleeter: faster

hibernation: to spend the winter in a dormant (sleeping) state

hubbub: loud noise

indisputable: certain to be true, undeniable, without a doubt

magnanimous: unselfish, generous in forgiving

rutabaga: a root vegetable somewhat like a turnip

underrated: underestimated, rate too low, not given enough credit

A YEAR WITH FROG AND TOAD WORD SEARCH

C Z Q H Z Y F L D W Q V G Y K L V U C U
A G S V I P I M E Z P L C Z O Y I N D B
X D V D O Z X A P D D S Y C E S P A L Q
G M I M K R E N O L A K W Y G O U Q N I
L B D E B E L L A F A Z L K N V K C T S
E R R F U T N S Q K V D C M I Y E J C G
D G K P P N Q G M V G U O H R S D R X F
W S S B A I E L G G K S B T P Y V L T V
C H H U L W S D R I B K C H S Y F X X I
O I S G M E O E H W M Y T O B T G F Z W
Z V F O O M S X N P X S R O S U D Q M K
S E W M C U E T U R T L E S A U B Z X I
O R N E O J L R P G K S W P N D L B F T
Y S Y M A M F A H N W F R O B Q E L U E
J T L T N H E L Z T T L D X H X R Y G H
L I D J Z B C K M X N D J H U R R D D D
G G X P C O O K I E S L G G S C I S B F
C O P Y W K A S W U Y B P K U S U N F U
P K R F A J U D J G D R A Z I L Q Q I W
Y J W F G Z A A V E Q V R K D Z S Q R C

Seasons

fall
spring
summer
winter

Characters

Birds
Frog
Lizard
Mouse
Snail
Squirrel
Toad
Turtle

Stories

Alone
Cookies
Shivers
Kite

Vocabulary

adieu
dusky
hubbub

CLASSROOM RESOURCES

Websites

<http://allaboutfrogs.org/weird/general/frogtoad.html>

Information about the characteristics and habits of frogs and toads.

<http://animals.nationalgeographic.com/animals/>

National Geographic's website about animals. Includes pages about amphibians and links to articles, photos, videos, and games.

<http://kids.yahoo.com/animals>

Information about animals on Yahoo!s Kids website. Includes general characteristics of animals groups, as well as links to particular species.

http://www.sandiegozoo.org/animalbytes/t-frog_toad.html

Excellent site with photos, links, and information about frogs and toads. Useful for student research.

Books

Lobel, Arnold. *Frog and Toad All Year*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc., 1976.

Lobel, Arnold. *Frog and Toad Are Friends*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc., 1970.

Lobel, Arnold. *Days with Frog and Toad*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc., 1979.

Lobel, Arnold. *Frog and Toad Together*. New York: Barnes & Noble Publishing, Inc. , 1972.

STUDY GUIDE RESOURCES

Civic Center of Greater Des Moines

<http://www.civiccenter.org/>

Work Light Productions—A Year with Frog and Toad

http://www.worklightproductions.com/curr_frogandtoad.htm

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This study guide was compiled, written, and edited by:

Emily Gruis, Deb Kellogg, Eric Olmscheid, and Lucy Suvalsky.

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