



WITH SUPPORT FROM THE NATIONAL  
ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES



# A YEAR WITH FROG AND TOAD

## Study Guide



Photo by Zach Rosing


Music by Robert Reale


Book and Lyrics by Willie Reale

Adapted from the Caldecott Award winning stories of Arnold Lobel

Indiana Curriculum Connections by Tracy Hastings Ed.S., Reading Education Specialist

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## **Welcome to *A Year with Frog and Toad***

Actors Theatre of Indiana is delighted to welcome you and your students to our production of *A Year with Frog and Toad*. We hope this study guide will serve as a useful resource for you as educators. It is designed to enhance student learning both before and after the performance, to support your classroom lesson plans, and deepen the education value of your students' experience. The information and classroom activities in this study guide support Indiana State Department of Education Curriculum Standards.

## **About Actors Theatre of Indiana**

Founded in 2005, Actors Theatre of Indiana is the only professional Equity theatre company in Hamilton County. The company's mission is to celebrate the power of musical theatre and enhance the quality of life in Central Indiana by offering superior professional theatre performances and programs that engage, inspire, educate, and entertain.

## **Themes from *A Year with Frog and Toad***

*A Year with Frog and Toad* is based upon four of Arnold Lobel's Caldecott Award winning books that emphasize that people who are different can make very good friends. The stories are about two friends who encourage and take care of each other. They play together, tell stories, and find ways to make each other happy. *A Year with Frog and Toad* relays those stories in a musical format that is playful with a unique score containing melodies arranged for young children. Students will see how a positive attitude is contagious and that being a good friend to one person can have positive effects on the broader community.

## **What to Expect in a Theatrical Show**

Theatre is an art form that depends on both the artists and the audience to be successful. A performance is influenced by an audience, just as an audience is influenced by a performance. The actors, director, choreographer, set designer, costume designer and others have created a new world that comes to life before your eyes. You as an audience member have a very important job to do. Everybody in the theatre is really a part of the play. Those on stage can see you, hear you and feel you, just as you can see, hear, and feel them. Your attention, responses and imagination are a real part of each and every performance. The play can be made better because of you. That's why it is so important to remain in your seat, keeping as still as you can while being comfortable. Chewing gum, taking pictures, texting, or talking during the performance are very distracting for the actors on stage. They love to hear you laugh when you find something funny and clap at the end of the play. The more you clap, the more the actors know you liked the show.

## What to Consider When Watching the Play

Theatre is a special art form that has its own words to describe what's in a play and how it is staged. Consider some of the words below before you see the show, so that you can talk about them afterwards.

Acting- How an individual interprets and performs the role of an imagined character.

Character- The role played by an actor as she or he assumes another's identity.

Choreography- The art of creating and arranging dances onstage.

Costume- The carefully selected or specially designed clothing worn by the actors.

Dialogue- The stage conversation between characters.

Director- The person who oversees the entire process of staging a theatrical production.

Plot- The "what happens" in a story: what is the situation and how the characters react to it.

Props- All the stage furnishings, including furniture, that are physically used by the actors.

Script- The text of the play, including dialogue and stage directions, all written by the playwright.

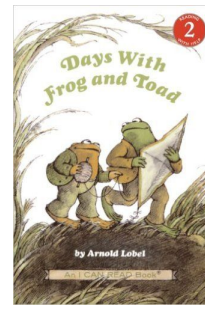
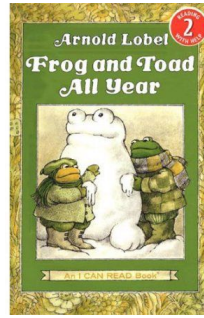
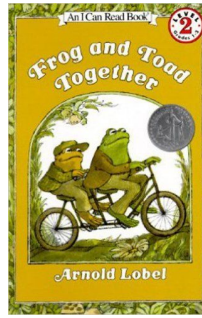
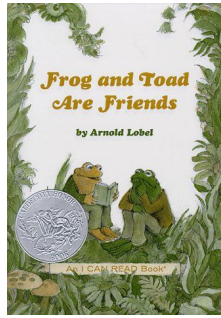
Set- All of the scenery that makes up the physical environment of the world of the play.

Theme- The central thought, idea or significance of the action of a play.



Photo by Zach Rosing





## To do... Before Beginning the Study Guide

- ❖ Gather all four books from the Frog and Toad series.
- ❖ Gather nonfiction books from the library about frogs and toads or use the materials provided in this guide.
- ❖ Allow for access to the Indiana Department of Natural Resources website.
- ❖ Print student activity pages from this guide or download PDF versions from [www.atistage.org](http://www.atistage.org)
- ❖ Plan to present grade appropriate lessons from this guide which are designed to support Indiana state standards in Reading Literature (RL), Writing (W), Social Studies (SS), Science (S), and Theatre (T)

The scenes in *A Year with Frog and Toad* correspond directly to a story from the *Frog and Toad* books by Arnold Lobel. Use the list below to choose stories to read with your class before seeing the show.

- ❖ ***Frog and Toad Are Friends***
  - Spring
  - A Swim
  - The Letter
- ❖ ***Frog and Toad All Year***
  - Down the Hill
  - The Surprise (Leaves)
  - Christmas Eve
- ❖ ***Frog and Toad Together***
  - The Garden
  - Cookies
- ❖ ***Days With Frog and Toad***
  - Alone



Photo by Zach Rosing

Indiana Standards
RL = Reading Literature W = Writing SS = Social Studies S = Science T = Theatre

## Indiana Curriculum Connections **Before the Show**

- Read aloud “Spring” from *Frog and Toad Are Friends* and discover how Frog tricks Toad into starting the new year by using a calendar.
  - SS.K.1.4 Explain that calendars are used to represent the days of the week and months of the year
  - SS.1.1.8 Explain how clocks and calendars are used to measure time.
- Each of the following stories from *Frog and Toad All Year* contain illustrations for the four seasons: “Down the Hill”, “Spring”, “A Swim”, “The Surprise”. Read the stories aloud and in order without showing the images. Have students complete the seasonal change flowchart with their own mental images. Have the students compare their ideas of the seasons with those in the book.
  - K.SS.3.5 Describe and give examples of seasonal weather changes and illustrate how weather affects people and the environment.
  - K.S.2.3 Describe in words and pictures the changes in weather from month to month and season to season.
  - K.RL.4.1 With support, describe the relationship between illustrations and the story in which they appear.
- Students think of someone they care about very much. They draw a picture of a gift they would like to give this person. Discuss celebrations during which we give gifts to others. Read “Christmas Eve” from *Frog and Toad All Year* and decide if Frog chose the perfect gift for Toad and why.
  - SS.2.1.4 Identify and describe community celebrations, symbols and traditions and explain why they are important.
- Lead students in a guided inquiry project having small groups research the differences between frogs and toads that are native to Indiana. Use the research pages in this guide and allow students to self select a format for presenting their information.
  - 2.W.5 With support, conduct short research on a topic.
    - Find information on a topic of interest (e.g., *cardinals*).
    - Identify various visual and text reference sources.
    - Organize, summarize, and present the information, choosing from a variety of formats
  - K.S.3.2 Describe and compare living animals in terms of shape, texture of body covering, size, weight, color and the way they move.

- 1.S.3.4 Describe how animals' habitats, including plants, meet their needs for food, water, shelter and an environment in which they can live.

## Indiana Curriculum Connections **During the Show**





- Create a T chart just before the theatre show to illustrate or list items that will create a successful experience for both the audience and artists. (Refer to the “What to Expect in a Theatrical Show” and “What to Consider When Watching the Play” sections of this guide.)
  - K.T.10.1 Experience live theatre.
  - 1.T.10.2 Discuss what makes theatre a unique activity.
  - 2.T.10.2 Identify local theatre activities and how they add to the life of the community.

## Indiana Curriculum Connections **After the Show**

- Compare and contrast the book versions of *Frog and Toad* with the stage production. Display a word bank with theatre terms. After discussing the terms, have students draw a vocabulary card from a bag. With a partner, students take turns using the term in a sentence to explain the following concepts. How are Frog and Toad alike? Different? How were the books and the performance alike? Different? What might the meaning of the performance be?(Remember a theatre vocabulary word should be used in each sentence.)
  - 1.RL.4.2 Compare and contrast the adventures and experiences of characters in stories.
  - 2.RL.4.2 Compare and contrast versions of the same stories from different authors, time periods, or cultures from around the world.
  - K.T.4.1 Make use of age-appropriate theatre vocabulary to critique what they see, hear, and understand.
  - 1.T.4.2 Speculate on the meaning of a performance.
- Read “Alone” from *Frog and Toad are Friends* to explore the concept of friendship. Use the book page template to create a friendship book for your classroom library. Once the pages are compiled, read the book aloud and pause to explore the following concepts. What does friendship mean? Does being a friend mean that we never disagree? Is it possible to be friends with someone who is different from me? What might some challenges be? How might we overcome them?
  - K.RL.2. With support, ask and answer questions about main topics and key details in a text heard or read.
  - 1.RL.2.1 Ask and answer questions about main idea and key details in a text.
  - 2.RL.4.1 Use information gained from the illustrations and words in a print or digital text to demonstrate understanding of its characters, setting, or plot.

- K.W.3.2 Use words and pictures to develop a main idea and provide some information about a topic.
- 1.W.3.2 Develop a topic sentence or main idea, provide some facts or details about the topic, and provide a concluding statement.
- 2.W.3.2 Write a paragraph or paragraphs on a topic that introduce a topic, provide facts and details about the topic, and provide a concluding statement.
- Read “The Letter” from *Frog and Toad are Friends*. Write a letter to Frog and Toad. What did you think of the performance? How did it make you feel? Would you like to see more plays like this one?
  - 2.W.3.3 Develop topics for friendly letters, stories, poems, and other narrative purposes that –
    - Include a beginning.
    - Use temporal words to signal event order (e.g., *first of all*).
    - Provide details to describe actions, thoughts, and feelings.
    - Provide an ending.
  - 2.T.5.1 Respond to stories and plays. What did you think? How did you feel? Should we go see more plays like this one?



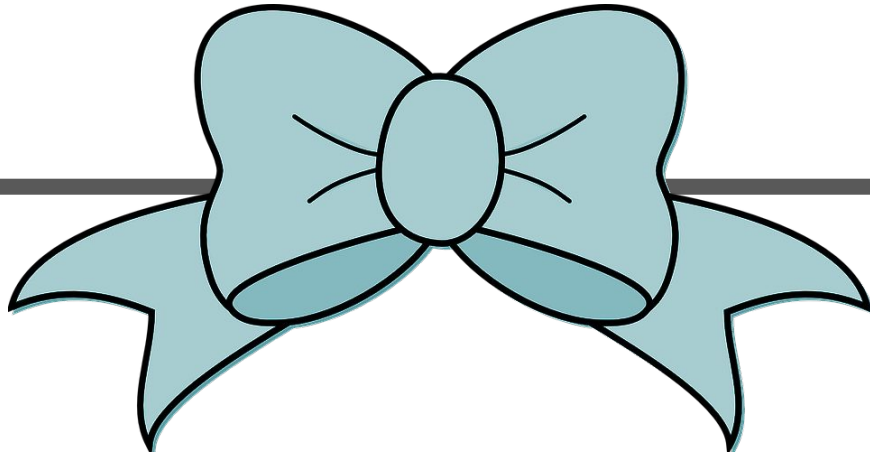
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# A GIFT FOR YOU

Draw a picture of a gift that you would like to give someone special.

- SS.2.1.4 Identify and describe community celebrations, symbols and traditions and explain why they are important.





# MY FRIEND AND I LIKE TO

Draw a picture of what you and your friend like to do. Add some words to tell about your picture.

K.W.3.2 Use words and pictures to develop a main idea and provide some information about a topic.

A large, empty rectangular box with rounded corners, intended for drawing a picture. The box is outlined in a dark gray line and occupies the lower two-thirds of the page.

# FRIENDSHIP PARAGRAPH PLANNER

Make a list about friendship. Turn the title into the topic sentence. Turn the list into supporting detail sentences. Add a concluding sentence that expresses an emotion. 2.W.3.2 Write a paragraph or paragraphs on a topic that introduce a topic, provide facts and details about the topic, and provide a concluding statement.

Friendship List

(Becomes topic sentence)

●

(Detail)

●

(Detail)

●

(Detail)

How do you feel about friendship?  
sentence)

---

(Becomes concluding

# FRIENDSHIP

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---

---

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[illegible]

# EVERYONE IS PART OF THE PLAY

Create a T chart to illustrate or list items that will create a successful experience for both the audience and artists.

- K.T.10.1 Experience live theatre.
- 1.T.10.2 Discuss what makes theatre a unique activity.
- 2.T.10.2 Identify local theatre activities and how they add to the life of the community.

Artists	Audience



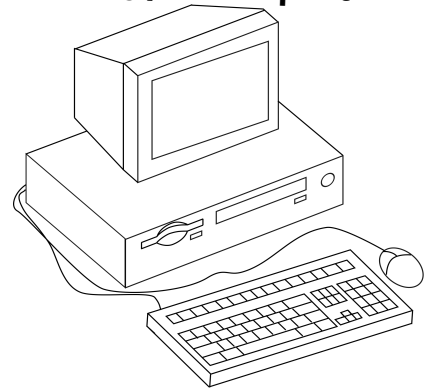
# HOW WILL I SHARE WHAT I LEARNED?

Choose a format for presenting your research information.

**Design a Poster**



**Type a Report**



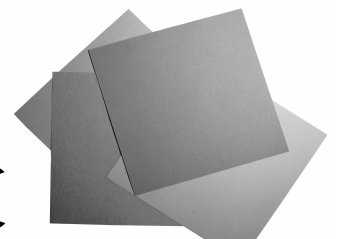
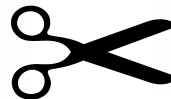
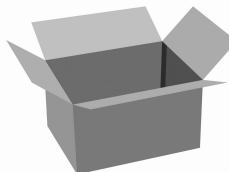
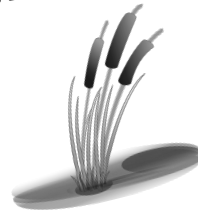
**Give a Speech**



**Compose and Perform a Song**



**Design a Habitat with Art Supplies**



# LETTER TEMPLATE

Write a letter to Frog and Toad. What did you think of the performance?  
How did it make you feel? Would you like to see more plays like this one?

A large rectangular area for writing a letter, enclosed by a dotted border. The area contains 20 horizontal lines for writing.



# LETTER ACTIVITY

- Read “The Letter” from *Frog and Toad are Friends*. Write a letter to Frog and Toad. What did you think of the performance? How did it make you feel? Would you like to see more plays like this one?
  - 2.W.3.3 Develop topics for friendly letters, stories, poems, and other narrative purposes that –
    - Include a beginning.
    - Use temporal words to signal event order (e.g., *first of all*).
    - Provide details to describe actions, thoughts, and feelings.
    - Provide an ending.
  - 2.T.5.1 Respond to stories and plays. What did you think? How did you feel? Should we go see more plays like this one?

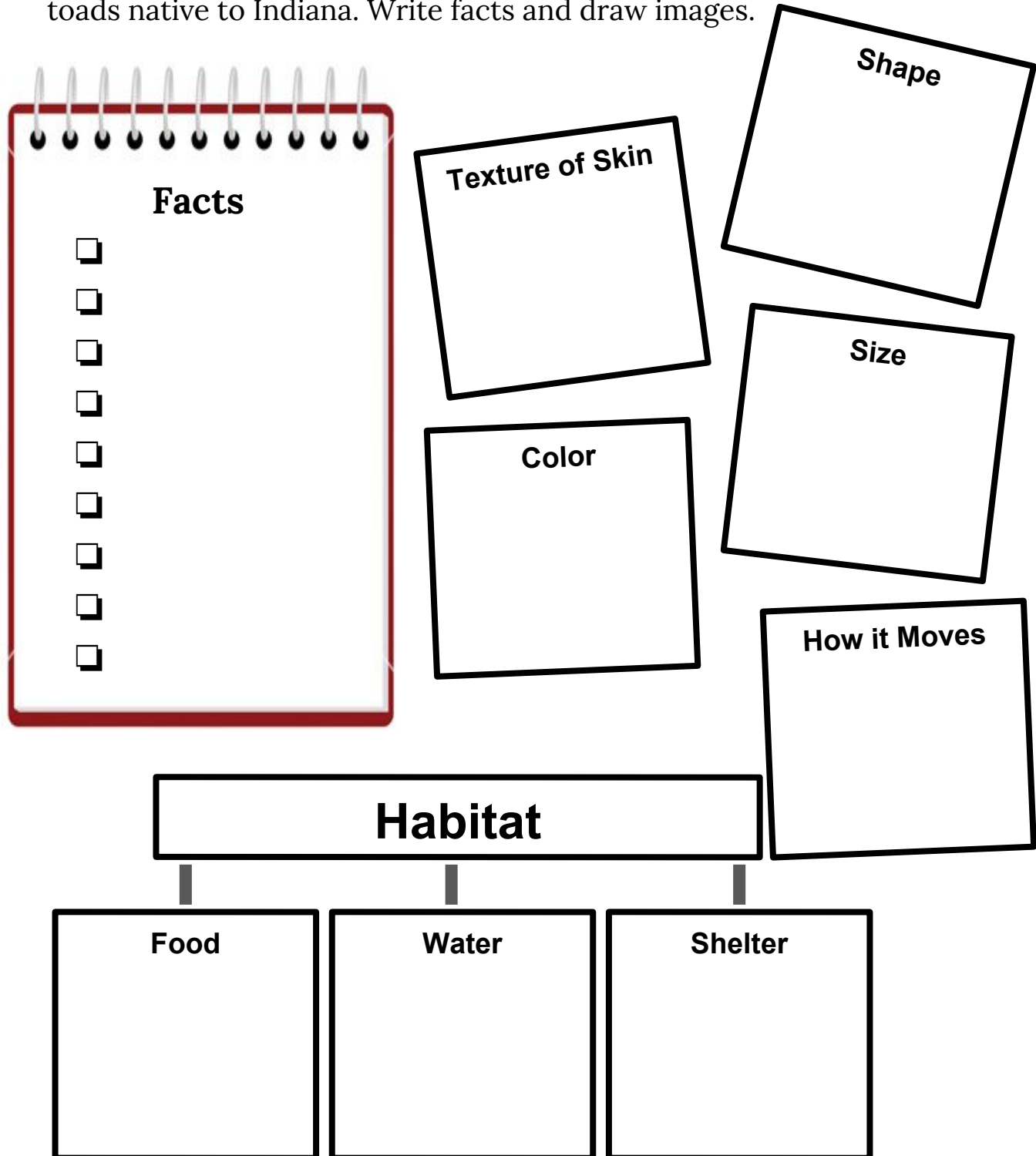
Mail letters to...

Actors Theatre of Indiana, Inc.  
510 3rd Avenue S.W., Suite D  
Carmel, Indiana 46032

Email letters to...  
[info@atistage.org](mailto:info@atistage.org)

# RESEARCHING FROGS AND TOADS

Work in small groups to research the differences between frogs and toads native to Indiana. Write facts and draw images.



The image shows a research template for frogs and toads. It includes a spiral-bound notebook with a red cover and silver rings, featuring a 'Facts' section with ten checkboxes. To the right of the notebook are five tilted rectangular boxes labeled 'Texture of Skin', 'Shape', 'Color', 'Size', and 'How it Moves'. Below these is a horizontal box labeled 'Habitat', which is connected by vertical lines to three separate boxes labeled 'Food', 'Water', and 'Shelter'.

**Facts**

- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐

**Texture of Skin**

**Shape**

**Color**

**Size**

**How it Moves**

**Habitat**

**Food**

**Water**

**Shelter**

# RESEARCHING FROGS AND TOADS

Use the information provided or have students research using the Indiana Department of Natural Resources website.

- 2.W.5 With support, conduct short research on a topic.
  - Find information on a topic of interest (e.g., *cardinals*).
  - Identify various visual and text reference sources.
  - Organize, summarize, and present the information, choosing from a variety of formats
- K.S.3.2 Describe and compare living animals in terms of shape, texture of body covering, size, weight, color and the way they move.
- 1.S.3.4 Describe how animals' habitats, including plants, meet their needs for food, water, shelter and an environment in which they can live.

## WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN FROGS AND TOADS?

### FROGS

- long powerful legs and webbed feet perfect for jumping and swimming
- teeth in their upper jaws
- smooth wet skins
- feel most at home in the water
- lay eggs in clusters
- have two bulging eyes that help them to see in all directions without having to move their heads

### TOADS

- chubbier bodies and shorter legs, better for walking and hopping on land
- no teeth at all
- feel most at home on land
- have poison glands on both sides of their necks, making predators think twice about eating them

## WHAT ARE THE SIMILARITIES BETWEEN FROGS AND TOADS?

### BOTH FROGS AND TOADS

- both lay their eggs in water
- both are tadpoles when they are young with only a head and a tail
- both are cold-blooded animals, meaning that their bodies stay at the same temperature as their environment
- both can live anywhere where there is fresh water
- both eat insects, earthworms, small fish, and spiders
- both use their long, sticky tongues to catch food and slurp it back into their mouths
- both swallow food whole because frogs don't have any bottom teeth and toads don't have any teeth at all





## AMERICAN TOAD

**DESCRIPTION:** 2-3.5" (5-9 cm). Usually brown in color, may also be shades of gray, red, olive or tan. Warty, dry skin. Dark spots on back typically containing one or two warts per spot. Belly white or cream-colored with mottled black spots. May have light-colored line down back. Parotoid glands ( bean-shaped structure behind eyes) does not touch ridge (cranial crests) behind eye, or only touch by small spur.

**INDIANA RANGE:** Statewide, with the exception of the lower Wabash Valley.

**DIET:** Land-dwelling (terrestrial) invertebrates, including insects and their larvae, spiders, earthworms and millipedes.

**HABITAT:** Found in many different habitats, ranging from backyards, agricultural fields, grasslands and sparse woods.



## BULLFROG

**DESCRIPTION:** Bullfrogs are 3.5 to 6 inches long. They are dark brown, greenish gray, light olive or yellowish green. Bullfrogs have a large external eardrum; their feet are fully webbed except for the longest toe; and their belly is cream colored. Males have yellow throats during breeding season.

**INDIANA RANGE:** Statewide

**DIET:** Anything it can swallow, including crayfish, insects, worms and snails.

Large frogs will eat other frogs, small snakes, mice and birds.

**HABITAT:** Ponds, lakes, stock ponds, strip mine ponds, permanent marshes and backwaters of larger streams.



## NORTHERN CRICKET FROG

**DESCRIPTION:** 5/8-1 1/2" (1.6-3.8cm). Dark triangle between eyes. Somewhat warty with dark stripe on rear surface of thigh. May have green or reddish stripe on back. Slightly blunt snout, relatively short legs, heavy webbing of hind foot reaching tip of first toe and next to last joint on longest toe. Vocal pouch on males is yellowish. Diurnal.

**INDIANA RANGE:** Almost statewide. Rare in northern quarter of state.

**DIET:** Aquatic larvae, insects.

**HABITAT:** Vegetated shorelines of reasonably permanent wetlands including ponds, lakes, gravel pits, rivers, and creeks.



## WESTERN CHORUS FROG

**DESCRIPTION :**  $\frac{3}{4}$ - 1  $\frac{1}{2}$ " (1.9-3.8cm). 3 dark longitudinal stripes on back. Smooth skin, brown to gray, belly is cream colored. Light line along upper lip, dark stripe from snout to groin and passing through eye. No webbing between toes. Males smaller than females.

**INDIANA RANGE:** Mostly statewide.

**DIET :** Small insects, spiders, small snails, and worms.

**HABITAT :** Almost any type of wet habitat, including damp meadows, marshes, swamps, temporary ponds, agricultural fields, and urban settings



## SOUTHERN LEOPARD FROG

**DESCRIPTION :** 2-3  $\frac{1}{2}$ " (5.1-9cm). Dark rounded spots on back rarely have white margins, and are usually smaller than the eye. Light spot on external eardrum. No dark spot on snout. Head is narrow and pointier than northern leopard frog. Green, brown, or a mix of the two. Dorsolateral ridge extends from eye down back.

**INDIANA RANGE:** West-central and southern Indiana.

**DIET :** Insects, earthworms, spiders, centipedes, snails, beetles, and smaller frogs.

**HABITAT :** Broad array of areas including, floodplain swamps, woodland ponds, sloughs, marshes, wet meadows, and streams.



## SPRING PEEPER

**DESCRIPTION :**  $\frac{3}{4}$  - 1  $\frac{3}{8}$ " (1.9-3.5cm). Dark 'X' on back. Light tan to dark brown. Belly white, sometimes with dark flecks. Narrow bar or dark spot between eyes. Large toe pads with a little webbing between toes.

**INDIANA RANGE:** Statewide.

**DIET :** Spiders, ants, and beetles, but will also eat mites, ticks, small caterpillars, and small snails.

**HABITAT:** Wooded areas that are in or near permanent or temporarily flooded areas such as swamps, ponds, lakes, and bogs.

# SEASONS CHANGE

Each of the following stories from *Frog and Toad All Year* contain illustrations for the four seasons: “Down the Hill”, “Spring”, “A Swim”, “The Surprise (Leaves)”. Listen to the stories in order without seeing the images. Draw the image of each season that you see in your mind. Compare your drawings of the seasons with those in the book.

- K.SS.3.5 Describe and give examples of seasonal weather changes and illustrate how weather affects people and the environment.
- K.S.2.3 Describe in words and pictures the changes in weather from month to month and season to season.
- K.RL.4.1 With support, describe the relationship between illustrations and the story in which they appear.

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**WINTER**

**SPRING**

**summer**

**FALL**

# THEATRE VOCABULARY

Draw a vocabulary card from the bag. With a partner, take turns using the word in sentences to answer these questions.

How are Frog and Toad alike? Different? How were the books and the performance alike? Different?

What might the meaning of the performance be?

- K.T.4.1 Make use of age-appropriate theatre vocabulary to critique what they see, hear, and understand.

- Actors
- Character
- Choreography
- Costume
- Dialogue
- Director
- Plot
- Props
- Script
- Set
- Theme

**ACTORS**

**CHARACTERS**

**CHOREOGRAPHY**

**COSTUME**

**DIALOGUE**

**DIRECTOR**

**PLOT**

**PROPS**

**SCRIPT**

**set**

**Theme**



# THESE WORDS ARE IN THE FROG AND TOAD STORIES. CAN YOU FIND AND CIRCLE THEM?

K.W.3.2 Use words and pictures to develop a main idea and provide some information about a topic.

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

Autumn  
Brisk  
Cookie  
Cup  
Dialogue  
Friend  
Fond  
Frog  
Fun  
Hill  
Leaves  
Leisurely  
Misunderstood  
Ode  
Pal  
Rake  
Risk  
Scenery  
Sled  
Snow  
Stroll  
Summer  
Steep  
Tea  
Tedious  
Toad  
Utter  
Wart  
Wind  
Year  
Underrated

# Teacher Feedback

Name of School?

Grade?

Did you use the study guide before your students saw the show?

Did you use the study guide after your students saw the show?

What sections of the study guide did you find most useful?

(Circle all that apply.)

- Welcome to *A Year with Frog and Toad*
- About Actors Theatre of Indiana
- Themes from *A Year with Frog and Toad*
- What to Expect in a Theatrical Show
- What to Consider When Watching the Play
- To do... Before Beginning the Study Guide
- Indiana Curriculum Connections Before the Show
- Indiana Curriculum Connections During the Show
- Indiana Curriculum Connections After the Show
- A Gift for You
- Classroom Friendship Book
- Everyone is Part of the Play
- Letter Template
- Researching Frogs and Toads
- Seasons Change
- Theatre Vocabulary
- Word Search

Is there a story or anecdote that describes the impact of this experience for your students?