



A
Year
With

Frog and Toad

Theatre For Young Audiences Version

Music
by
Robert Reale

Book and Lyrics
by
Willie Reale

Based on the books by Arnold Lobel

STUDY GUIDE

Greetings and welcome to *A Year With Frog and Toad TYA!*

This version of the show has been developed specifically for theaters wanting to produce the show for young audiences.

TYA or "Theater for Young Audiences" has a long and noble history. When you produce a musical for young audiences you are introducing them to the magic of theater and isn't that a great thing to do?

You are also nurturing not only the next generation of writers, directors and performers but also the next generation of audiences. Many think this is the single most important thing we can do in the theater, and I agree.

We've included a number of resources to help make your production not only artistically excellent, but also educationally sound. Your license includes the script, score and orchestrations for the show and also top of the line music tracks that you can use in performance. Also included is this study guide, which you can provide to local schools and student groups either in hard copy or digital form.

This study guide is broken into two sections - an Educator's Section and a section for young people, the Student Pages. The Educator's Section provides teachers and parents with all the tools necessary to turn a day at the theatre into an interactive educational experience. It contains biographies of the show's creators, a complete plot synopsis, curriculum connections in a variety of content areas, and activities to do before and after the production.

The Young Person's Activity pages are the last three pages of the guide. These pages can be copied for any child attending the performance and can be used in conjunction with the Educator's Section. These pages are written especially for young people and are designed to encourage them to use their imagination and reinforce the themes of the show.

So please take advantage of these resources and thank you in advance for making the world a better place!

Enjoy the show.

Tim McDonald
iTheatrics.com



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Study Guide Designed and Produced by iTheatrics

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Plot Synopsis

The **BIRDS** have come back at the end of winter ready for spring (*A Year With Frog and Toad*). **FROG** and **TOAD** are still in hibernation. In their dreams, they sing about their friendship and the new year ahead. **FROG** then wakes and decides to get his friend out of hibernation. Once convinced it's spring (*Spring*), **TOAD** decides that he wants to plant a garden but is very impatient for the seeds to grow. He tries many things to make them grow (*Seeds*) before falling asleep. By morning, the seeds have begun to grow.

Now that it's morning, **TOAD** is sad because he knows this is when mail is delivered and he never receives any. **FROG** decides to write **TOAD** a letter to cheer him up. He asks **SNAIL** to deliver it for him (*The Letter #1*).

FROG and **TOAD** go to the pond for a swim. **TOAD** doesn't want anyone to see him in his bathing suit because he thinks he looks funny. However, **TURTLE** calls **MOUSE** and **LIZARD** over to look at **TOAD** (*Getta Loada Toad*). Freezing, **TOAD** must eventually leave the water and everyone gets a good look at **TOAD** in his bathing suit.

Later **TOAD** brings lunch to **FROG**, but **FROG** is not home. He's left a note that he wants to be alone on the island. **TOAD** worries that **FROG** is sad and goes to see him on the island. He finds out that **FROG** is happy and he wanted some time alone (*Alone*). Meanwhile, **SNAIL** is still on his way to deliver **FROG**'s letter to **TOAD** (*The Letter #2*).

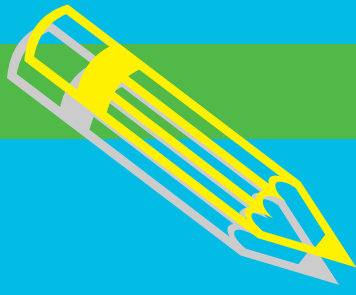
FROG and **TOAD** are preparing dinner. They make cookies, intended for dessert, and can't stop eating them (*Cookies*). After eating all the cookies **FROG** and **TOAD** go out to fly a kite, which proves to be troublesome at first but soon the kite flies (*The Kite*).

The summer has ended and leaves cover the ground (*Leaves: A Year With Frog and Toad*). Both **FROG** and **TOAD** plan a surprise by secretly raking the other's yard (*He'll Never Know*). They clean one another's yard but as soon as they leave, the **SQUIRRELS** come and mess up their neat piles of leaves. Later **FROG** decides to tell **TOAD** a scary story about a **YOUNG FROG** who escapes the clutches of a **LARGE AND TERRIBLE FROG** before he is eaten (*Shivers*). Meanwhile, **SNAIL** is still on the way to deliver Frog's letter to **TOAD** (*The Letter #3*).

It's now winter. **FROG** and **TOAD** are on top of a hill and are prepared to sled down it despite Toad's fear (*Down the Hill*). On the way down, **FROG** accidentally falls off the sled and **TOAD** ends up on a dangerous and bumpy path. When **TOAD** reaches the bottom of the hill he is so mad that **FROG** made him sled that he says he will never talk to **FROG** again. **SNAIL** arrives with **FROG**'s letter to **TOAD**. After reading the letter **TOAD** decides to talk to **FROG** again. **SNAIL**, having delivered his first letter, is very proud (*I'm Coming Out Of My Shell*).

On Christmas Eve, **TOAD** is in his kitchen worried because **FROG** is late. He imagines all the terrible things that could have happened (*Toad To The Rescue*) until finally **FROG** arrives with a present (*Merry Almost Christmas*).

With the return of winter, **FROG** and **TOAD** are back in hibernation. The **BIRDS** return to let us know that it's almost spring again, as **FROG** and **TOAD** get ready for another fun-filled year (*Finale: A Year With Frog and Toad*).



The Creators



Book by Willie Reale
Lyrics by Willie Reale
Music by Robert Reale
Based on the books by Arnold Lobel

Willie Reale (Book and Lyrics)

Willie is a free-lance writer, living in New York. He has collaborated with his brother, Robert, on a musical called *Once Around The City*, which was produced by New York Stage and Film and at the Second Stage Theatre in New York. *Quark Victory*, another musical written with his brother, was produced by the Williamstown Theatre Festival. Other plays have been produced at the Ensemble Studio Theatre, the Actors Theatre of Louisville, and Circle Repertory Company. With his brother he has written *A Year With Frog and Toad*, which was performed at the Childrens' Theater Company in Minneapolis, the New Victory Theatre and at the Cort Theater on Broadway. Willie received two Tony nominations for his book and lyrics.

In 1981, he founded The 52nd Street Project, an organization that brings inner-city children together with professional theater artists to create theater. He served as the theater's artistic director for 18 years. With the Project, he produced hundreds of plays. The programs of The 52nd Street Project are currently being replicated at 12 sites across the country through a series of publications entitled *The Kid Theater Kit*. For the *Kit* he wrote "52 Pick Up," the Project how-to manual, as well as numerous plays and the lyrics to hundreds of songs, including two full-length musicals, all of which are available through Dramatists Play Service. In June of 1994, he was awarded a MacArthur in recognition of his ingenuity in creating theater and theater education programs for young people.

For television, Mr. Reale has written for the NBC dramas *Homicide: Life on the Streets*, *Deadline*, and *Mr. Sterling*. For Fox he has written for *Keen Eddie* and *The Jury*. He created a series called *Out There* for Sesame Workshop and the BBC, which shot in Australia. His work on the show was recognized by an Australian Film Institute Award (The Australian Emmy) and Prix Jeunesse and Writers' Guild of America nominations. He has taught at New York University and the Yale School of Drama. Willie is married to producer Jenny Gersten. They have two children, Augustus and Leonardo.

Robert Reale (Music)

Musicals-Broadway: *A Year With Frog and Toad* (Tony nomination). Off-Broadway: *Once Around The City* (2nd Stage), *Quark Victory* (Williamstown Theater Festival). Music for plays: *Richard Dresser's Rounding Third* (directed by John Rando) *Diva*, (WTF), *Salvation's Moon*. Film: *Ten-13*, *Passing Over*, *Wigstock*, *Dealers Among Dealers*, *The Victim*, others. Television: *PrimeTime*, *20/20*, *Inside Edition*, *Out There* (theme), *Invent This* (theme), *Mugshots*, *Crime Stories*, *The System*, *The Mailman and the Piranha*, *Case Closed*, *Beating The Rap*, *The Royals: Dynasty or Disaster?*, others. As composer and record producer he has worked with Julie Andrews, Mel Torme, Sid Caesar and Imogene Coca.

Page to Stage

Each of the songs and scenes in *A Year With Frog and Toad* corresponds directly to a story from the Frog and Toad books. These stories are strung together to fill the year that passes during the show. Below you will find a list of the songs from the show and the stories that they represent. Use this list to choose stories to read with your class before coming to the show so that your students will know what will happen in the show.

Song

"Spring"
"Seeds"
"The Letter #1"
"Getta Loada Toad"
"Alone"
"Cookies"
"The Kite"
"He'll Never Know"
"Shivers"
"Down the Hill"
"Toad to the Rescue"
"Merry Almost Christmas"

Story

Spring
The Garden
The Letter
A Swim
Alone
Cookies
The Kite
The Surprise
Shivers
Down the Hill
Christmas Eve
Christmas Eve

Book

Frog and Toad Are Friends
Frog and Toad Together
Frog and Toad Are Friends
Frog and Toad Are Friends
Days With Frog and Toad
Frog and Toad Together
Days With Frog and Toad
Frog and Toad All Year
Days With Frog and Toad
Frog and Toad All Year
Frog and Toad All Year
Frog and Toad All Year

Quick Reference Guide: Stories to Read (Sorted by Book)

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

Two Additional Songs

There are two songs that do not correspond directly to a specific story in the book but are still in the show.

The song "A Year With Frog and Toad" serves as a narrative device for the musical and is sung by the Birds. It sets up 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 running joke of Snail singing "The Letter" pays off with a new song, "I'm Coming Out Of My Shell" in which he expresses his pride in his accomplishment in delivering the letter.

Pre-Show Activities

- 1) Print out and copy the Student Pages of this study guide for everyone who will be attending the performance.
- 2) Go over the vocabulary, plot synopsis, and background information from the guide with your students.
- 3) 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 some of the stories aloud in class, or have students read them, in order to become familiar with the characters and some of the events in the show.
- 4) *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. Have students discuss the seasons both in your region and other parts of the country. Do you have snow in winter like Frog and Toad or is it warm all year where you live?
- 5) There are no human characters in *A Year With Frog and Toad*. In the musical, human actors and actresses will play the roles of animals. Have students brainstorm ways in which they think this will be represented. As they come up with ideas, remind them to think of all aspects of theatrical performances including costumes, vocal quality, gestures, movements, etc.
- 6) 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 that your students will understand what the Birds are referring to.
- 7) 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 the new proud and outgoing Snail he has become. Explain this expression to your students so that they understand it is not meant literally, and ask them if there have been times when they have "come out of their shells."
- 8) Discuss with your students the etiquette of being an audience member at a live theatrical performance. Items for discussion: appropriate responses, no chewing gum, no talking, going to the bathroom before the performance, etc.

Post-Show Curriculum Connections



SCIENCE

Toad decides he wants to plant a garden in the spring. He is very impatient with his seeds and tries many things to make them grow. They finally begin to grow, but not because of his crazy techniques. Get some plant seeds that can be grown in your classroom, potting soil and some paper cups. Have each student plant his or her own seed or seeds in a cup and care for it 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)

All of the characters in *A Year With Frog and Toad* are animals. Help your students do research on the various animals (frogs, toads, birds, turtles, mice, lizards, moles, squirrels, snails) and how they actually live and behave. Focus on those behaviors that you saw in the show (eating habits, habitat, migration, hibernation, movement, etc.) Before you start, have your students brainstorm a list of the things that they think were human characteristics given to the animal for the show as opposed to actual characteristics of the animal. (National Standards for Science: Content Standards 1 & 3)



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 past decades and centuries 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 other people. (National Standards for Technology: Content Standards 1 & 4)



HEALTH

Frog and Toad lose control because the cookies taste so good. However, this is not a very healthy idea. Discuss healthy eating with your students and have them create a collage of foods that are good to eat by drawing or collecting pictures of various food items. Then, have them create a collage of snack foods that they like to eat that are not as healthy. Make a chart of how much healthy food they should eat in relation to how much snack food, and talk about healthy food choices and eating habits. (National Standards for Health: Content Standards 1, 3 & 6)



DANCE

During "Seeds" Toad decides that he will perform an interpretive dance for his seeds to encourage them to grow. Give your students the motivation for an interpretive dance. It could be to tell a story, to convince you that they can have recess, or anything else that might be fun for them and get them inspired. Once they understand their 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)



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 Standards for Visual Arts: Content Standards 1, 2 & 3)

Post-Show Curriculum Connections (Continued)



ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Writing

Frog writes a friendly letter to Toad to cheer him up. Have your students think about a friend or family member who would like receiving 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)

Reading

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)

Story

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 of friendship. Ask them to think about a favorite activity they have participated in with a friend or sibling and turn it into a story. Stories can be written or told orally. (National Standards for Language Arts: Content Standards 6 & 12)



REFLECTION

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 them 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 Theatre: Content Standard 8)



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 the students think have the same climate as your city. If your climate differs from that of Frog and Toad, have your students also identify areas that are similar in climate to the one they saw in the show. (National Standards for Social Sciences: Geography Standards 1 & 2)



THEATRE

Collect a number of costume pieces that your students think would be helpful and have them try to recreate some of the characters and scenes they saw in the show or create new scenes based on other Frog and Toad stories that were not included in *A Year With Frog and Toad*. (National Standards for Theatre: Content Standards 1 & 2)

1+2 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. Now have your students draw the hands on each clock where they would be to represent that time. Once they get these times drawn, try more times. Place the students in pairs to play a time game. Have them draw some blank clocks and give each other times to draw on the clocks, or draw the hands on the clocks first and then look at the drawings and write down the times. National Standards for Mathematics: Measurement

A Year With Frog and Toad



The Plot

Frog and Toad are best friends. We meet them as they wake up from their long winter's nap to begin another year together. Throughout the year they do many fun things like baking cookies, going swimming, flying a kite, and planting a garden. They spend a lot of time with each other and with other animals they know. But not every day is fun for them. Sometimes they get sad and sometimes they always remember that they are best friends who care about each other very much.

The Characters You'll Meet

Frog
Toad
Birds
Mouse
Snail
Turtle
Lizard
Squirrels
Moles
Young Frog
Mother Frog
Father Frog
The Large and Terrible Frog

Creating Characters

Some of the actors in the show play many different characters. An actor might be a bird in one scene and a mole in the next. Think about how they will be able to do this and look like the different characters. While watching the show, notice how much the actors can change with their costumes, as well as other ways.

Cool Words from A Year With Frog and Toad

Adieu - French for farewell or goodbye

Bamboo Shoot - the hard, woody stems of the bamboo plant. Bamboo is a tall tropical grass.

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, rated too low, not given enough credit

Snail says a lot of crazy words while delivering Frog's letter to Toad. Here are some of them:

Aghast - shocked and amazed

Agog - eager and excited

Chew the fat - to chat, have a lengthy talk

Dusky - somewhat dark

Escargot - an edible snail dish, often served as an appetizer before the meal.

Exhausting - very tiring

Fleeter - faster

Creating Scenery

The show takes place over one year with all four seasons (spring, summer, winter and fall). How can the scenery be changed to show each season during the show? What things do you think will be onstage for each of the seasons? During the show, try to remember all of the things that were onstage for each season and talk about those things with your classmates.



A Year With Frog and Toad Word Search

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

Seasons

Fall
Spring
Summer
Winter

Characters

Birds
Frog
Lizard
Mouse

Snail
Squirrel
Toad
Turtle

Stories

Alone
Cookies
Shivers
The Kite