



Walton Arts Center

# Performance Guide

## *A Year with Frog and Toad*



*Adapted from the Caldecott Honor winning Frog and Toad books by Arnold Lobel, this Tony-nominated Broadway Musical tells the story of two friends, cheerful Frog and grumpy Toad. Through four seasons of adventures, the pair meet whimsical creatures, celebrate their own uniqueness and deepen their friendship. Join this charming adventure, a heartwarming retelling of Lobel's timeless stories of unlikely friendship.*

### Ideas for Curriculum Connections:

Arkansas Learning Standards: RL.1.1, RL.2.1, RL.3.1; RL.1.2, RL.2.2, RL.3.2; RL.1.3, RL.2.3, RI.3.3; RL.1.5, RL.2.5, RL.3.5; RL.1.6, RL.2.6, RL.3.6; SL.1.1, SL.2.1, SL.3.1; SL.1.4, SL.2.4, SL.3.4. Fine Arts Standards Theatre: P.4.1.1, P.4.2.1, P.4.3.1; R.7.1.1, R.7.2.1, R.7.3.1; R.8.1.1, R.8.2.1, R.8.3.1; R.9.1.1, R.9.2.1, R.9.3.1; R.9.2.3, R.9.3.3; CN.10.1.1, CN.10.2.1, CN.10.3.1. Theatre Appreciation: CR.1.TA.3; P.4.TA.1; P.4.TA.6; P.6.TA.1; R.7.TA.4





## The Story

The musical, *A Year with Frog and Toad* is based on *Frog and Toad* story books by Arnold Lobel. The musical begins when birds return in the spring and Frog and Toad sing about friendship. Toad is sad because he does not receive mail. Frog writes Toad a friendly letter and asks Snail to deliver it. In the summer, Frog and Toad go to the pond for a swim, but Toad is shy about appearing in his bathing suit. The friends make a special dinner with cookies. They rake each other's leaves and tell scary stories in the fall. When winter returns they sled down the hill. Frog falls off and Toad is cranky after a bumpy sled ride. Toad's letter from Frog finally arrives. Frog and Toad go into hibernation and prepare for another year together.

## The Author

Arnold Lobel was a young boy when he decided that being a writer and an illustrator was what he wanted to do. He grew up in Schenectady, NY. After graduating from art school, he married his wife, Anita, and had two children. Lobel called himself a daydreamer instead of an author or an artist. He would see the pictures in his mind before he would think up the words to go with them. His most famous books are about Frog and Toad: *Frog and Toad Are Friends* (1970), *Frog and Toad Together* (1972), *Frog and Toad All Year* (1976), and *Days with Frog and Toad* (1979). His daughter, Adrienne was the inspiration for this series of books. Turning his books into a musical was her idea, and she designed the set for the original production. She is also married to Mark Linn-Baker, who played Toad for the original production.

## The Art Form

Musical theater is a special genre of theater. Music with drama helps make stories memorable. Songs in musicals express characters' feelings and advance the action. Music and drama work together. Playwrights turn the stories into events for the stage. Playwrights work with musicians and poets who write music and lyrics to express ideas and feeling through song. Choreographers work with the music to express musical ideas through movement.

## The Performers

There are no human characters in *A Year with Frog and Toad*. In the musical, actors suggest all the animals in human form. To do this, actors think about how animals might feel shyness, fear, trust and pride, then use their bodies to suggest those feelings as human beings, rather than imitating animals. An actor may also "double" parts, or play a bird in the first scene and a mole in the next.

## The Company

Trike Theatre is Northwest Arkansas's professional theater for youth. Its mission is to Cultivate Creativity-Build Character - Strengthen Communities in order to transform the lives of youth and families through exceptional theatre experiences. Through its programs, Trike creates safe, inclusive spaces where all young artists are allowed to take risks, celebrate mistakes, and find their artistic voices.



# Learning Activities

## Before the performance

Read the *Frog and Toad* Story Books. Each of the stories in the musical were taken from a specific book.

1. **Days With Frog and Toad**  
*Shivers*
2. **Frog and Toad All Year**  
*The Surprise*  
*Down the Hill*  
*Christmas Eve*
3. **Frog and Toad Are Friends**  
*Spring*  
*The Letter*  
*The Swim*
4. **Frog and Toad Together**  
*Cookies*

## Show the story

**Read Around and Nature Hunt** – As a group read the *Frog and Toad* books. Many different animals appear in the stories including: birds, a snail and of course a frog and a toad. In your library “hunt” through books to research the animals found in the stories. Draw picture of their habitats. Create an animal poster of your research.

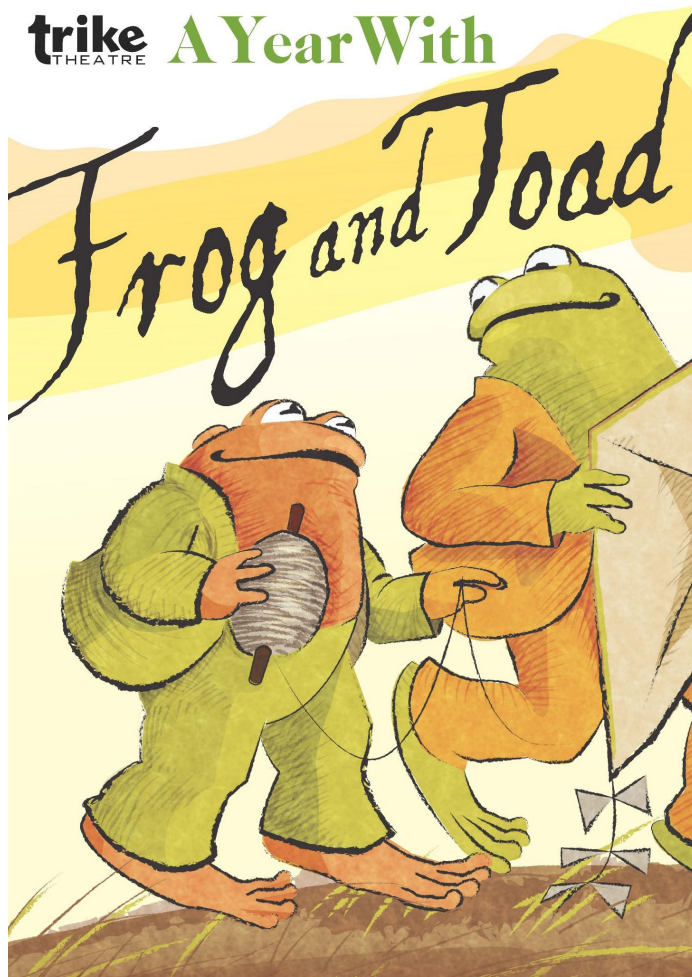
**Make a checklist** - of which animals make their home in the state of Arkansas. Discuss migration and hibernation.

**Character Around** – Consider the movement of each animal. As a group, explore movements of birds, snails, frogs and toads. Show how a snail would deliver

mail slowly. Show how Frog and Toad eat cookies. Demonstrate walking to a swimming hole embarrassed by a swim suit. Show how Frog and Toad would look flying a kite.

**Musical ideas** - What songs do you remember? What feelings were expressed in song? See the list of songs and the stories they are based upon (left). Write a song about the Four Seasons of Friendship.

**Story writing** - Write a story about your favorite animal or about how an animal was a friend to you. Write an adventure story from an animal's point of view.



## Problem Solving

Discuss with students a problem that Frog and Toad have in the story? How do they solve the problem? Choose a problem from the list below. First ask students to talk about, how Frog and Toad would solve the problem. Then, in pairs, ask the students to act out the problem and solution.

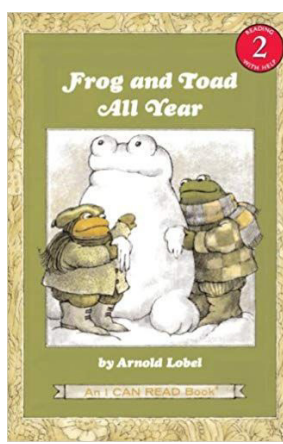
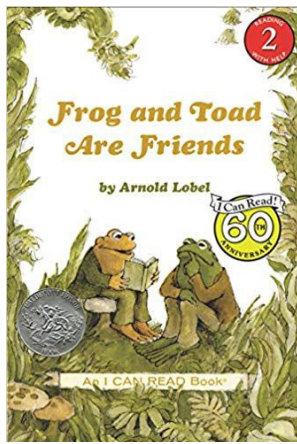
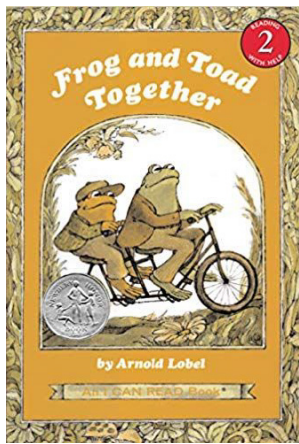
- Two friends want to play different games
- Two friends want different snacks
- Two friends want to use the same markers
- One friend hurts another friend's feelings
- Some friends are playing a game together, but one friend feels left out
- A friend does not have a place to sit at lunch
- Two friends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

## Create a Happiness Collage

In *A Year with Frog and Toad*, Frog and Toad enjoy being friends. They feel happy when they are around each other. Ask students what makes them happy. Ask them to create a collage of all the things that make them happy by drawing their own pictures or using pictures from magazines.

Hang the collages up in the classroom. Ask students what things they have in common with other students in class. What things are different? Ask students to discuss with classmates the ways our friends help us feel happy.





## Post Show Conversations

- Name the animals you noticed in the musical. (frog, toad, bird, mouse, snail, turtle, lizard, squirrel and mole).
- Describe the performance of one song in as much detail as possible.
- Describe the quality of movement in a dance to music. (Symmetrical or Asymmetrical movement? What quality of energy? What instruments were played?)
- Describe the music or rhythm in the song.
- What kind things did Frog and Toad do for each other?
- Discuss student's own stories of friendship. In what activities do they participate with friends? Create a story about a friend that can be told verbally and in writing.

## Learn More Online

Trike Theatre | Northwest Arkansas Professional Theatre for Youth and Families  
[triketheatre.org/](http://triketheatre.org/)

Arnold Lobel on Scholastic  
[scholastic.com/teachers/authors/arnold-lobel/](http://scholastic.com/teachers/authors/arnold-lobel/)

## Volume 17 Number 10

Colgate Classroom Series performances help students meet Arkansas Learning Standards.

**Learn more at:**  
[www.waltonartscenter.org](http://www.waltonartscenter.org)

### Walton Arts Center

#### Learning & Engagement

Laura Goodwin, *Vice President*

Dr. Patricia Relph, *Arts Learning Specialist*

Mallory Barker, *School Services Specialist*

Meghan Dale, *Engagement Coordinator*

Sallie Zazal, *Learning Coordinator*



Find us on Facebook!

Walton Arts Center

Learning & Engagement

Walton Arts Center **2019/20 Learning programming** is **generously supported** by these funders, sponsors and benefactors:

#### Education Sponsors:

Colgate-Palmolive  
 JB Hunt  
 Tyson  
 Unilever  
 Saatchi & Saatchi X  
 Walmart

#### Education Grantors:

Arkansas Arts Council  
 Bank of America  
 Baum Charitable Foundation  
 The John F. Kennedy Center  
 for the Performing Arts  
 Walmart Foundation  
 The Walton Family Foundation

#### Education Partners:

Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art  
 Northwest Arkansas Education Service Cooperative  
 UA Center for Children & Youth

Additional support for arts education programs comes from all *Friends of Walton Arts Center*.

#### Become a Friend!

More than 900 *Friends of Walton Arts Center* support arts education programming with their annual support. Become a *Friend* today and help Walton Arts Center continue to serve even more students over the next year.

For more information on the *Friends of Walton Arts Center* program, please call **479.571.2784** or visit [waltonartscenter.org/donate](http://waltonartscenter.org/donate)



Walton Arts Center