

A Year With Frog and Toad



About the Show

A Year With Frog and Toad, based on the books of Arnold Lobel, takes the audience on a journey through the seasons as best friends Frog and Toad celebrate time spent together. From growing plants to sledding down hills, Frog and Toad remind us to slow down, enjoy the present moment, and take care of one another.

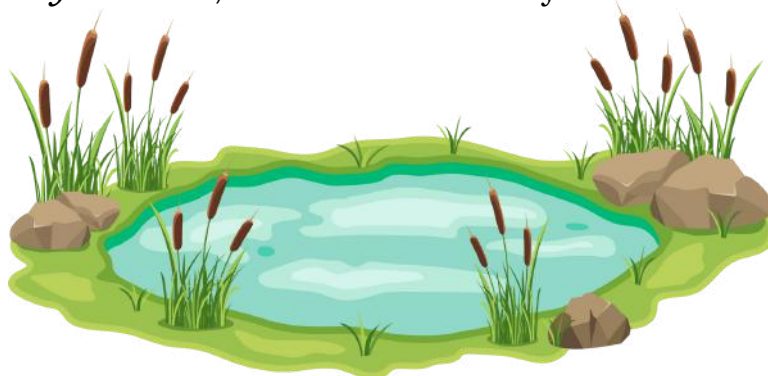
A Year With Frog and Toad was first produced at the Children's Theatre Company in Minneapolis. When it was mounted on Broadway in 2003, it was nominated for Tony Awards for Best Musical, Best Book, and Best Score. It is rare for work developed by a professional company of theatre for young audiences to transfer to Broadway, and this musical broke new ground in doing so.

About the Author

A Year With Frog and Toad is adapted from four books by writer and illustrator Arnold Lobel. He first started drawing animal characters in the second grade, as a way to connect and make friends with his classmates. He described himself as a daydreamer, and once said that he “cannot think of any work that could be more agreeable and fun than making books for children.”

Arnold married another children’s book writer and illustrator, Anita Kempler. They divorced in the 1980s, after which Arnold came out as gay. His daughter Adrienne thought that this was part of why it was so important for him to show two male characters loving each other, as Frog and Toad do.

The musical was commissioned by his daughter Adrienne, who also designed the set for the first production. It was written by brothers Robert and Willie Reale, who enjoy collaborating together on many musical projects. They also created the score for the musical *Johnny Baseball*, which tells the story of the Boston Red Sox.



Teaching Frog and Toad in the Classroom

Massachusetts Frameworks Connections

By the end of kindergarten students can:

- Understand that all plants and animals grow and change over time.
- Explain how plants and animals can change their environments: for example, how tree roots grow and break sidewalks.

By the end of first grade students can:

- Collect data on seasonal changes in the local environment: for example, birds leaving an area or sunsets happening earlier.
- Use patterns in temperature, rainfall, and snowfall to predict what future weather will be like.
- Use a calendar to record seasonal events or personal experiences.

By the end of second grade students can:

- Understand how people interact with the physical world (environment).
- Explain how people adapt to the environment they live in.

By the end of third grade students can:

- Explain how specific characteristics help living things survive (like how thorns protect roses from being eaten by animals).
- Understand that plants and animals can grow and reproduce in different ways
- Understand that when an environment changes, some plants and animals survive and reproduce, some move to other places, and some die.



Teaching Frog and Toad in the Classroom

Prompt Thinking Across the Curriculum

In 2003, Harvard's project zero developed eight "Artist Habits of Mind" that help students succeed in artistic endeavors. In 2021, The Cambridge STEAM Initiative studied the development of six "STEAM Habits of Mind" that allow students to perform well in STEAM pursuits. Connections between the two sets of habits are highlighted below, and informed the development of the activities in this guide.

Artist Habits of Mind

Observe: Learning to attend to visual contexts more closely than ordinary "looking" requires, and thereby to see things that otherwise might not be seen.

Stretch & Explore: Learning to reach beyond one's capacities, to explore playfully without a preconceived plan, and to embrace the opportunity to learn from mistakes.

Engage & Persist: Learning to embrace problems of relevance within the art world and/or of personal importance, to develop focus conducive to working and persevering at tasks.

Express: Learning to create works that convey an idea, a feeling, or a personal meaning.

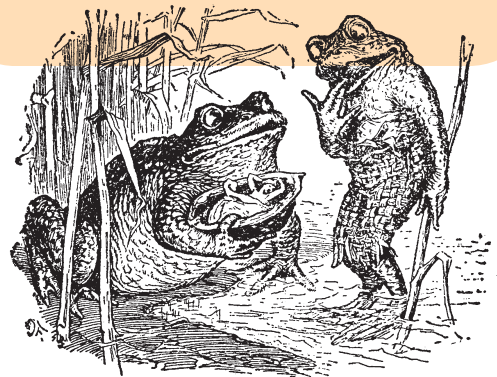
STEAM Habits of Mind

Observe: Look closely, find patterns, collect data

Stretch & Explore: Ask questions, test, learn from mistake, improve

Engage & Persist: Develop curiosity, plan, collaborate, don't give up

Express: Show meaning, be creative, be intentional



Common Processes: Noticing, Wondering, Exploring, Visualizing, Communicating

Teaching Frog and Toad in the Classroom

Drama Activities Connected to Science Standards:

Grade Level	Standard	Activity
Kindergarden	K-LS1-2(MA).	Create Connecting Images of a plant or an animal throughout different phases of its life cycle.
First Grade	1-ESS1-2. 1-LS1-1.	<p>Provide a statement that includes data about seasonal weather and have students move to one of Four Corners based on the season they think the statement applies to.</p> <p>Play The Truth about Me with students cast as different plants or animals that could be found in the same environment to discuss similarities and differences between how organisms respond to their habitat.</p>
Second Grade	2-LS2-3(MA). 2-ESS2-1.	<p>Have students create 3-D models to show the interactions between frogs, toads, and their environments.</p> <p>Have students design a product to protect the physical landscape from changes due to wind and weather and present their ideas to the class as an Advertising/Design Pitch.</p>
Third Grade	3-LS4-2. 3-LS4-3.	Prompt students to create a "Recipe for Survival" for a designated environment you have studied in class. Discuss how particular animals are especially adapted to live in specific environments and how others could not survive.

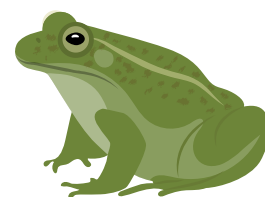
Full Lesson Plans from Drama-Based-Pedagogy:

Life Cycle of a Flower (K-2)

Time Travel Machine Through the Seasons (K-2)

Chemical and Physical Weathering (3-5)

Fire in the Forest (3-5)



Teaching Frog and Toad in the Classroom

Big Ideas

- Take time to enjoy the present moment
- Little acts of kindness can make a big difference
- True friends embrace their differences
- Friends share experiences both good and bad
- Humans and animals adapt and change with their environment over time



Discussion Questions Before the Show

- What are the characteristics of a good friend?
- How do you handle it when you start feeling nervous, scared, or anxious about things that might come next?
- What types of activities do you do to mark the seasons or passage of time? How are these activities similar or different from year to year?
- How do people and animals adapt to changes in their environment?
- What are different ways that people can communicate with each other?
- When do you like to be around other people, and when do you prefer to be alone?
- What are some of the ways that you enjoy connecting with nature?

Discussion Questions After the Show

- How did Frog and Toad show care for one another throughout the year?
- How did the characters in the play overcome some of the challenges that came with each season?
- How did the design team use lights, sound, props, and costumes to create each season?
- Throughout the play, Toad reminds us that his watch is broken. How does Toad feel about time? How do Frog and Toad think about time differently?
- What words, ideas, and events happen more than once throughout the play? How does this repetition help tell the story?
- In nature, there are many cycles, such as the water cycle and the life cycle of plants. How is the structure of this play similar to cycles in nature?
- Frogs and toads are very different animals. For example, frogs have smooth skin that they can breathe through even when they are underwater. Toads have thick bumpy skin, spend more time on land, and prefer walking to jumping. In the play, the characters of Frog and Toad also have different personalities. What are some of their differences, and how do they handle when their differences cause conflict?

Activity Prompts for Teachers and Families

Social and Emotional Learning Connections:

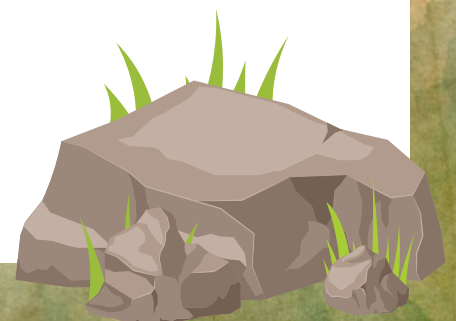


- Throughout the play, Toad becomes anxious imagining the worst case scenario, such as when he is worried that something bad has happened to Frog, or that Frog does not want to be his friend any more. When we feel nervous, breathing strategies can help our bodies feel more calm. Practice using **deep breathing techniques**. Which ones do you like? Which might you use if you start feeling nervous like Toad?
- In the song “Alone,” Frog lists many things he is grateful for. Make your own gratitude list; what are you thankful for? What people, places, and things bring you joy?
- This play shows us that little acts of kindness can make a big difference. Brainstorm a list of tiny, random acts of kindness that you can perform to brighten someone else’s day. Each time you do one, write it down on a small slip of paper and put it in a jar. Watch your jar of good deeds grows throughout the year.

Literacy Connections:



- Come up with your own scary story for a dark and stormy night. (like Frog!)
- The children’s book *Frog and Toad* won a special literary award. Check out other Caldecott award winning children’s books from your local library. **Here** is a list.
- Frog mails Toad a letter because he never gets any mail. Mail your own letter or drawing to a neighbor, relative, or friend to brighten their day. **This video** will help you learn how to address your letter.



Activity Prompts for Teachers and Families

Fine Arts Connections:



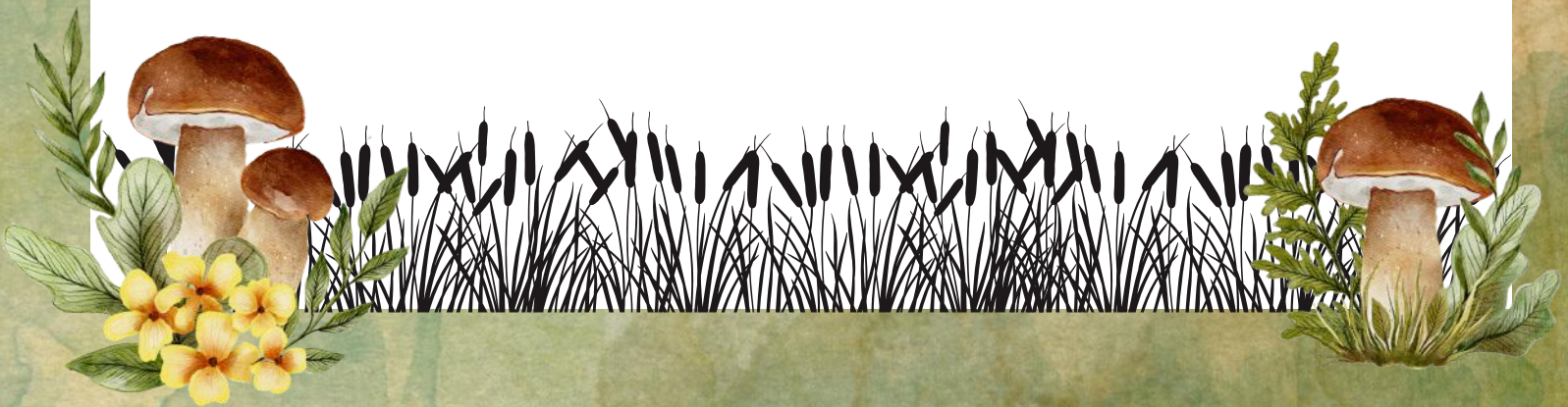
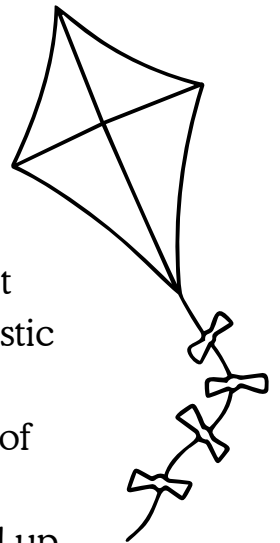
- Frog and Toad sing about how much they love eating cookies. Try writing a song about your own favorite food.
- Frog and Toad are best friends even though they are different species of animal. Brainstorm your own unlikely animal friends and draw a picture of them going on an adventure together.
- Snail is proud of his role delivering mail, but, like all snails, he moves very slowly. Explore moving around in the manner of different animals. How does it feel to slowly inch along like a snail, to hop like a frog or toad, or to flap your wings like a bird? How does each animal's movement help them in their environment?

STEM Connections:

Physical Science:



- Frog and Toad enjoy flying a kite together. Kites can be made at home from recycled materials such as paper, old clothes, or plastic bags. Try making your own kites and experiment. [Here is a tutorial](#). What materials, shapes, and sizes fly best? What kind of wind conditions do you need to make your kite soar?
- Toad's watch is mechanical, which means it needs to be wound up often. The process of winding a watch usually involves turning a knob attached to a spring inside the watch. This tightens the spring, which stores potential energy. The potential energy becomes kinetic energy when it causes the watch's hands to move. Check out [PBS Kids](#) for more information about kinetic and potential energy.



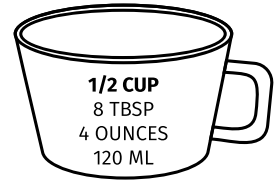
Activity Prompts for Teachers and Families

More STEM Connections:

Math:



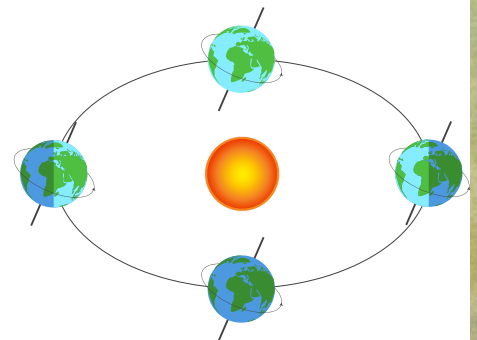
- Toad bakes cookies to give to Frog. Ask an adult for a favorite cookie recipe and follow along the instructions to learn about fractions, measurement, and ratios of ingredients.
- Toad breaks his clock at the beginning of the play and then he can't tell time. You can make your own clock out of a paper plate. PBS kids has an explanation [here](#). Then, you can move the arms of the clock to count the hours and minutes to tell time. Older audience members might want to try creating a [water clock](#) or [potato clock](#), with adult supervision.



Earth Science:



- As the planet spins on its axis and rotates around the sun, our weather and seasons change. Try taking a foam ball and poking a pencil through its center. Hold the ball at a diagonal angle, and tilt it towards and away from a flashlight or lamp. Summer occurs when the northern hemisphere (the upper half of the ball) is tilted towards the sun, but the southern hemisphere (the lower half of the ball) is tilted away. While Massachusetts (in the northern hemisphere) has longer days and more light, which means more warmth, Australia (in the southern hemisphere) is in their cold season!



Activity Prompts for Teachers and Families

More STEM Connections:

Life Science:



- Toad and Frog are joined in this play by other animal friends, including Snail, Birds, Mouse, Turtle and Lizard. All of these animals can be found in the same habitat, which is the environment that the animals call home. Both frogs and toads need habitats that have fresh water and plenty of insects to eat. As you go around your community, keep an eye out for the animals in the play. If you see one, notice the characteristics of its habitat. If you have a yard, there are **steps you can take to make it a toad-friendly habitat.**
- Frogs and toads both hibernate in the winter. This means they go to sleep once the weather turns cold and food becomes scarce, then wake up when it is warmer again. In the play, Frog and Toad hibernate together. In real life, however, most frogs like to hibernate under the water, while toads bury themselves in the ground. Like many hibernating animals, they slow down their heart rate until they wake up. Try finding your pulse by touching your wrist or your neck and count how many times your heart beats in a minute. Now, imagine if it only beat half that many times! That's the state that hibernating animals put their bodies into. **Visit this site** for more activities related to hibernation and other ways that animals and plants spend the winter.
- Toad plants seeds in his garden, but has trouble being patient while they grow. Plants grow slowly, but there are some you can plant indoors and watch as they move through their lifecycle. You can 'plant' pea seeds by folding them in a damp paper towel, then placing them (still in the paper towel) in a plastic cup or clear plastic sandwich bag. Store the container somewhere warm, and check them each day to see if you notice any changes, making sure that the paper towels do not dry out. Within a few days, you may see roots starting to branch out from the seeds.



Dramaturgy Activity One: Make a Naturalist Journal

Put your art and science habits of mind (see page four) to the test in this activity which will show you how to create and use your own naturalist's journal to make observations, record data, and test predictions about the seasons.

Step One Gather Your Materials:

- Two pieces of thick colored paper or cardstock sized 8.5 x 5.5"
- Ten to fifteen pieces of white paper also sized 8.5 x 5.5" (or use the provided template on pg. 14 to print and cut out desired number of pages.)
- Holepunch
- A rubber or elastic band about half as long as the short side of the paper
- A small twig close to the same size as the short side of the paper
- A ruler
- Optional: scrapbooking paper, stickers, markers, colored pencils, crayons, or stamps to decorate the cover



Step Two Assemble Your Journal:

1. Place one piece of the cardstock or thick paper onto a flat surface. Then, place the white paper on top of it. Finally, add the second piece of cardstock or thick paper onto the stack.
2. Ask an adult to help you hold the paper in place and punch two holes along the left side of your stack of paper; one hole near the top and one near the bottom. It can help to use a ruler to mark where the holes should go so they are evenly spaced.
3. Place your twig on the hole punched side of your paper. Thread one end of the rubber or elastic band through the top hole and loop it over the stick. Hold the twig in place and stretch the other end of the rubber band along the backside of your book. Thread the other end through the bottom hole and loop it over the bottom of the twig.
4. Decorate the front cover of your journal, using nature as inspiration!

Step Three Plan a Trip Outside:

Choose a day when you will have time to sit down and connect with nature. Be sure to check the weather before you go! [Here](#) is a list of parks and playgrounds in Boston by neighborhood. [Jamaica Pond](#), [BackBay Fens](#), and [The Boston Public Garden](#) Lagoon might be places you could spot some of the characters from *Frog and Toad*.



Step Four Record your Observations:



Write down the date, time, and location where you are observing nature for each of your journal entries. Then, write down things you see, hear, smell, and feel. You can also draw pictures of the leaves, trees, bugs, twigs, plants or animals that you see. Come back to the same spot several times throughout the year to see how nature changes with the seasons. How many different colors, shapes, and textures can you find?

For Families: Engage in Citizen Science:

Apps like [SEEK](#) by iNaturalist and [Budburst](#) allow you to take pictures and upload your observations to a shared database which scientists use to conduct research about how ecosystems change over time.

For Teachers: Assign Journal Prompts for Homework

- Choose an animal you can see in the environment. Write a poem from the perspective of that animal.
- Draw a tree in each of the four seasons and describe how it changes.
- Observe a bird for a few minutes. Describe its size, colors, and movements.
- Draw an insect and label the head, thorax, and abdomen
- Label the parts of a flower
- Record the temperature, windspeed, and air pressure when you go outside and make a prediction about how it might change the next time you return to that location.

Find more journal prompts [here](#)!

Visual Arts Connections: Seasonal Crafts to Include in Your Journal

WINTER: Place white paper against a tree trunk and rub it with a crayon to reveal the texture of the bark.

SPRING: Collect wildflowers and press them between two pieces of wax paper and leaving them under a heavy book for a few weeks. Then, you can tape them in your journal using packing tape or clear contact paper.

SUMMER: Trace the shadows of natural objects into your journal on a sunny day. Make a **cyanotype** (a sun print) using construction paper and flat objects, or try it with paper coated with a chemical to make it extra sensitive to UV light.

FALL: Collect leaves and paint them with watercolor or coat them with water based ink and press them into your journal making a leaf stamp! You can also do this with an apple, a cucumber, a bell pepper, or any other fruit or vegetable with a texture that is interesting to you.



Visual Arts Vocabulary:

Line: Can be dotted, dashed, straight, curved, horizontal, vertical thick, thin, etc.

Shape: When lines connect to enclose space they create shapes. Shapes can be organic or inorganic, geometric or abstract

Space: Positive space is filled with something, negative space is empty

Value: How light or dark something is shaded

Color: Represented on the color wheel. Red, yellow, and blue are three primary colors that when their pigment is mixed together in different combinations can make all other colors.

Texture: How a surface looks and feels, can be smooth, bumpy, jagged, etc.

Date: ____/____/____

Time: ____:____

Location: _____

Observations:



.....

Date: ____/____/____

Time: ____:____

Location: _____

Observations:



Dramaturgy Activity Two: South for the Winter

The play is narrated by The Birds, who fly south for the winter and return in spring in a process called migration. Migration is seasonal movement from one place to another. Many birds fly south for the winter to where it is warmer and there is more food. (Not every animal migrates! Some, like frogs and toads, go to sleep for the winter, which is called hibernation. See the activities list for notes about hibernation.)

Stamina



Even tiny birds travel hundreds of thousands of miles during their migration.

Blow up a balloon and toss it up in the air. Try to keep it aloft by hitting it back up every time it comes near the ground. How long can you keep it up before you get tired and need to take a break?

Ask an adult if you can borrow a few coins, such as two nickels and a dime, and hold them in your hands. How heavy are they? If there was an animal this size, how strong do you think it would be? This is the weight of the Blackpole Warbler, a bird which flies more than 2,000 miles over the ocean without stopping for its winter migration.



Teacher Tip: Try the Drama Strategy “Flocking”

With a group of others, stand together, all facing in one direction. Whoever is at the front of the group starts leading everyone in a slow movement, and the rest of the group follows along, mirroring the leader’s gestures and actions as closely as they can. When a movement causes the group to change the direction they are facing, and the former leader is out of view, the new leader is whoever is at the front of the group in the new configuration. The goal is for the group to look like they are moving as one, changing leadership fluidly. This is what birds experience as they migrate in a flock! How did this experience change or help shape your understanding of migration?

Navigation

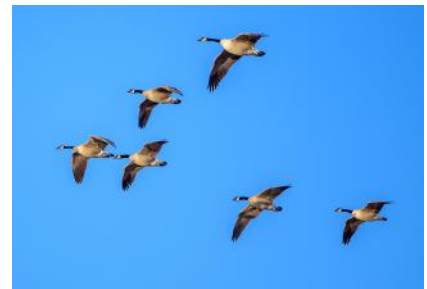
Birds don't have paper maps or GPS like humans to help them on their journeys. Explore the challenge of navigating a space by...

- Take a piece of paper and a pencil, and try to draw from memory a path that you take every day, such as the route you take from home to school.
- Close your eyes, and try to find your way from one room in your house to another, relying on your sense of touch and hearing to help you find your way.

Birds rely not just on their memories, but on their amazing senses, which pick up not only sounds and smells but also clues humans can't feel, like the magnetic field around the Earth. Brainstorm a list of the clues you would use to help you find your way in traveling from one familiar place to another. What sounds, sights, and smells would you look for? What landmarks would help you find your way?

Shape

Some birds, like geese, fly in a formation that looks like the letter V, with the leader bird in the center. This shape makes it easier for them to stay together and ride the wind. With a friend or family member, try staying the same distance apart while you walk, even when you turn around or change direction. How does it feel to stay in formation and follow the leader?



Help a Bird Out

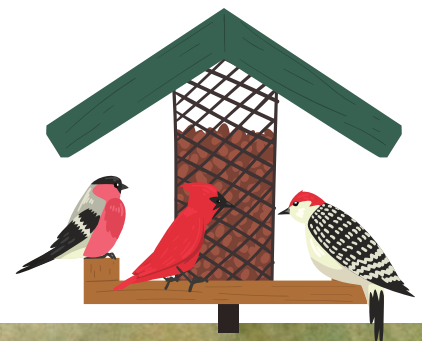
There are ways we can help birds along on their migration journey.

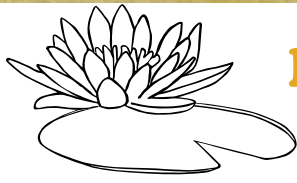
- **Take the pledge** to go "lights out" and turn off unnecessary outdoor lights during bird migration seasons
- Create a **homemade bird feeder** that birds can stop at for a snack on their journey

Resources for Further Exploration

[Audubon for Kids](#)

[PBS Kids Migration Challenge](#)





Lesson Plan One Winter Worries



Grade Level: 1-2

Materials: Large open space to move

National Theatre Standards:

TH:Cr1.1.1.a. Propose potential choices characters could make in a guided drama experience

TH:Pr4.1.1.b. Use body, face, gestures, and voice to communicate character traits and emotions in a guided drama experience

TH:Cn10.1.1.a. Identify character emotions in a guided drama experience

Four Corners

Gather students and explain that in this first activity, they will be expressing their own ideas and opinions. You will make a statement, and then they will respond to the statement by moving to one of four corners in the room. Each corner will talk to each other and then share out to the class about their discussion. **Start with the example statement:** If I were an animal, I would want to be an animal that was very good at... jumping, digging, flying, climbing Designate each of the four corners of the room to represent a particular answer. Then, repeat the prompt, inviting students to move to the corner that best represents them. Once participants have divided themselves into four corners, invite the groups to dialogue about why they made their choice. In this example, Talk with your group about why you chose this kind of animal. Then, ask them to synthesize their responses and share one to three key ideas with the rest of the class. Repeat with the following prompts:

The habitat I would like to live in is... the forest, the ocean, the desert, the North Pole

The best way to spend the winter would be... flying south like a bird, hibernating underwater like a frog, hibernating underground like a toad, or storing food in a nest like a mouse

The best thing to do with a friend would be... enjoy nature, bake cookies, tell stories, go swimming

My favorite season is... spring, summer, fall, winter

(Three corners version: I often think about... things that are going to happen in the future, things that happened in the past, things that are happening right now)

This Setting Needs

In *A Year With Frog and Toad*, we see the characters spend time together in all four seasons. For today's lesson, we'll be focusing specifically on winter. We will start by brainstorming together what a winter setting might look like.

Invite students to sit together on the floor or in chairs as an audience, facing a large empty space.

Explain that we will create an environment or a setting using only our bodies. If needed, help students work together to define "setting" or "environment" as a place or location where an event takes place. Next, invite students to build a familiar setting that they have a shared understanding of, such as a playground. The first setting we are going to create is a playground. Everyone take a moment and think of the different things and people that you would find on a playground. When you have an idea, please raise your hand. I will invite you to come into our stage space and shape your body into a frozen action of something you do or might find on a playground, as you describe what you've become.

Offer a few examples to the group, such as, "This setting needs a swing." Then become a swing set or become a person on a swing. Or, "this setting needs a game of tag", as you become a child about to tag another person.

Once instructions are clear, begin the activity. Encourage students to make specific physical choices that they can hold for a few minutes. Build the playground setting until 5-10 students are on stage. Once the image is built, ask questions to the audience: **What do you see in this setting? What clues do the actors give you to help you understand who they are and what they are doing? If you had to give this setting a title, what would you title it?** After the questions are completed, give students a round of applause and have them return to their seats.

Repeat the activity, this time inviting the group to create an image of a **wintry day**. Repeat the questions as well.

Teacher Tip: Depending on the age of your students, you may want to introduce the idea that while winter is cold and snowy where we live, that isn't true everywhere in the world. See our activities list for a suggested activity to teach explore the relationship between the seasons and the tilt of the planet's axis.

Statues With Voices in the Head

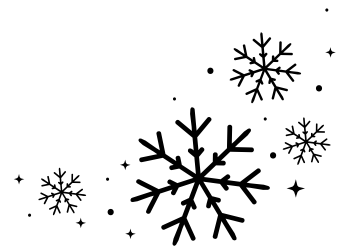
Congratulate the group on making strong acting choices to tell a story. In the next activity, they will continue using their bodies to show emotions and ideas. This time, however, they will be working on their own, instead of with the group.

- Invite students to find their own space in the room with a set perimeter.
- Introduce the activity: In a moment I will give you a word/theme/character to explore. Your job is to create a frozen statue that represents your response. Encourage students to use their whole bodies, including their faces.
- Offer the prompt by asking students to “make a statue of...”. Give students a moment to think, then count backwards from five or ten to one while they create their images.
 - Once statues are made, name choices that you see. For example, “I see arms wide open” or “I see big smiles on faces.”
 - Have one third or one half of the class remain in pose, while the rest relax. Use similar questions as This Setting Needs: What do you see in this setting? What clues do the actors give you to help you understand who they are and what they are doing?

Place a hand on or near the shoulder of one person within the image and ask the student to speak their character’s inner thoughts: *When I place my hand on/near your shoulder, please tell us what your character is thinking...* Or, hold a hand over the character’s head (to make an imagined “thought bubble”) and invite students in the audience to speak an inner thought for the character: *What do we think this character might be thinking? What else could this character be thinking?*

Prompts: Invite students to make statues of

A blizzard, Sledding, Too cold, Snow day, Worry, Comfort



Debrief:

At the end, have the group give themselves a round of applause. Ask them to reflect: What sort of statues did they make? How did they use their bodies to show emotions and ideas? How did adding dialogue change their experience in this activity from This Setting Needs? How did this activity make them think differently about winter than This Setting Needs?

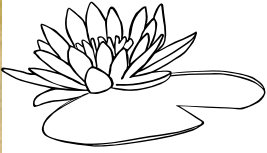
Paired Improvisation

Explain that in their next activity, students will be challenging themselves as actors to use their voices as well as their bodies as they play two characters with very different ideas about winter: Frog and Toad.

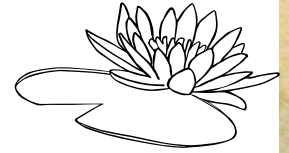
In the play, Frog and Toad hibernate through the winter, as those animals do in real life. For the purposes of this scene, we will be pretending that Frog and Toad have chosen to stay awake together for just a few more days.

- Break students into pairs.
- Explain that in this strategy we will explore an imaginary conversation between Frog and Toad. We will do this work improvisationally, meaning we will make it up as we go, and we will do it at the same time so that your pair can explore your thinking on your own without an audience.
- Explain that one actor will start by playing Toad, who is nervous about winter and thinks it is far too cold. The other will start by playing Frog, who is very excited about all the activities he can do in winter with his best friend Toad. Toad wants them to stay inside where it is warm; Frog wants them to go outside and play in the snow.
- Ask students to begin their scenes at the same time.
 - If student focus allows for it, pause them partway through and ask one group that is engaged and successful to resume their scene with the class watching for a moment.
- Then, invite them to reverse roles and try the scene again, each playing the other character.
- At the end, have them give themselves a round of applause and invite them to reflect:
 - How did they use their bodies and voices to show their character's emotions?
 - What arguments did Frog make? What arguments did Toad make?
 - What strategies were most successful in convincing the other actor? Did any of the pairs manage a compromise between the two friends?
 - What did this activity help them realize about navigating conflict with friends?
 - What did this activity show them about navigating different perspectives?

At the end, recap. The group has used their bodies and voices to show emotions, ideas, and characters. They explored winter environments and activities, and improvised a scene between two characters with very different ideas about winter, who are still good friends in spite of their differences. Name specific positive moments or points of pride in the lesson, then thank the class for their hard work.



Lesson Plan 2: Bystander Intervention



Grade Level: 3-4

Length: 60min

Materials: Large, open space. Whiteboard, chalkboard, or large poster paper. Three different colored writing utensils.

National Theatre Standards:

TH:Cr1.1.3 a. Create roles, imagined worlds, and improvised stories in a drama/theatre work.

TH:Cr2-4 b. Make and discuss group decisions and identify responsibilities required to present a drama/theatre work to peers.

TH:Pr61.4 a. Share small-group drama/theatre work, with peers as audience.

Overview:

This lesson uses a series of drama exercises to explore bullying and bystander intervention using the song from *Frog and Toad* called “Get a Load of Toad.”

Strategy One Show Us:

Show Us is an activity that invites students to work individually or in small groups to create a visual representation of an idea, theme, text, event, or character using their own bodies. Students make sense verbally and kinesthetically in this activity as they place their understanding, represented via their bodies, in dialogue with others’ bodies.

Directions:

Invite students to silently walk through a defined space without touching one another. Ask the group to create a silent, spontaneous individual or group image of a word on the count of 10. For example: In groups of three, show us Bravery. Once students have made their frozen images, make observations about the similarities/differences in the images, for example: “I see bodies standing open and strong. I see arms up. I see eyes looking out to the future.”



Directions (continued):

Or, ask half of the students to unfreeze and observe the other students' images, asking the group to describe what they see bodies doing in space. In this version, it is important to repeat the observation process for the other half of the student images. After observation/meaning-making is completed, either by the teacher or by the group, ask the students to resume walking through the space silently. Then, ask the group to explore the next word through the same process. Use the words to your right as prompts for this dramatic exploration.

Prompts:

Friendship
Confidence
Teasing
Bullying
Bystander

Debrief:

How did it feel to make the different images with your body either in groups or by yourself?

What were some of the similarities and differences we saw between our images?

How can you use your body language to communicate when you see someone being treated unfairly?

Teacher Tip:

Encourage students to partner with different groups for each prompt.

Strategy Two Role on The Wall (Toad):

Role on the wall is an activity that ask students to consider how external words and actions impact a character's internal feelings and might contribute to decisions they make.

Directions:

Draw a large outline of a head/shoulders on paper or whiteboard; leave plenty of space to write inside and outside the figure. Label the figure "Toad." Tell the students that you will now be exploring the song "Get a Load of Toad" from the perspective of the character of Toad. Invite the group to name out words, phrases, or messages that Toad might have received that make him feel self-conscious in a bathing suit. Write student responses on the outside of the figure in one color. Next, ask students to describe how Toad might feel inside, based on the outside messages, and write those feelings on the inside of the figure with another color. Finally, ask students to connect specific "outside" messages to the inner feelings, and draw lines between those connections on the figure, in a third color.

Teacher Tip:

Ask students WHY Toad might feel a particular way. Be sure to get a variety of responses.



Debrief:

What are some of the words we wrote on the inside of Toad? What about on the outside? How do the external messages Toad receives impact how Toad feels inside? Based on how Toad is feeling at this moment, what do you think he might do the next time he goes swimming? Why?

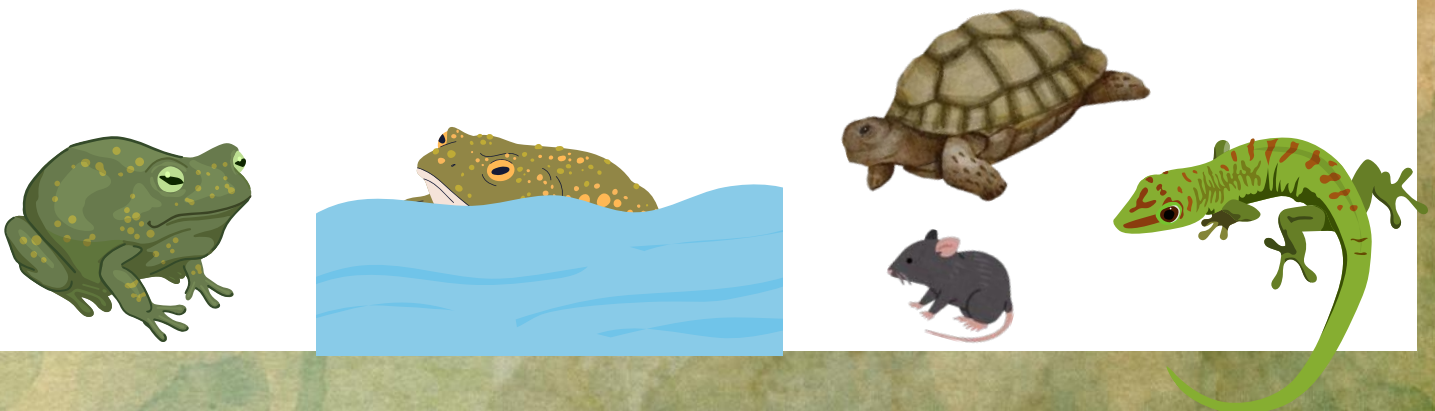
Strategy Three Real and Ideal Images:

Real and Ideal Images is an activity that asks students to use their bodies to imagine and analyze what would need to change in order for a problem to have an ideal outcome.

Directions:

Explain to students that they will be making frozen, silent pictures with their bodies. If necessary, select some volunteers to model a frozen picture of a familiar scene, like recess on the playground. Next, break students into small groups and have them create a frozen image of the moment at the end of “Get a Load of Toad” when Turtle, Mouse, Lizard, and Frog all make fun of Toad for looking funny in a bathing suit. The students will create a “real” representation of this moment.

Next, have the students create an “ideal” representation of what they would like to happen when Toad mentions he thinks he looks funny in a bathing suit and is afraid to come out of the water. If the students selected characters to play in the first image, the same students should play these characters in the second image.



Directions (continued):

Select one group to share their real image. Ask the larger group of students to describe what they see in the image using neutral language. For example, encourage students to make observations like, “I see a student sticking out their tongue”, instead of “Turtle is sticking his tongue out at Toad.” Next ask what feelings emerge for the students based on the “real” image.

Once you have fielded some responses, have the group switch to showing their “ideal” image. Again, ask students to make neutral observations. After a few ideas are offered, ask students to offer what feelings the “ideal” image brings up for them. Finally, compare and contrast. Ask the example group to show their “real” image one more time, then transition to the “ideal” image. Ask the larger group what changed between the “real” image and the “ideal” image. Who moved and how? What does that tell us about how students can intervene when they see a friend being teased?

Teacher Tip:

To expand the reflection, you can hold your hand above one of the students in the “real” image and ask the larger group what they think the student’s character might be thinking or feeling in that moment. Then, repeat for the “ideal” image.

Whole Lesson Debrief:

At the end, recap. First, students explored how people use body language to communicate messages through “Show Us”. Next, the group analyzed internal and external factors that contributed to Toad’s distress about wearing a swimsuit through “Role-On-The-Wall”. Finally, they explored how a moment of teasing can be transformed into a moment of community building through “Real and Ideal Image.” Name specific positive moments or points of pride in the lesson, then thank the class for their hard work.



Resources

Find more Frog and Toad

- Watch the claymation version on [YouTube](#)
- Watch stop motion animation artist India Rose Crawford on [Instagram](#)
- Watch the television show on [AppleTV](#)

Picture Books

Find picture books for every season with curated lists from the Boston Public Library: [Winter](#), [Spring](#), [Summer](#), [Fall](#)

Science of Seasons

Find out why the Earth experiences seasons by watching this [video](#) from Crash Course Kids.

Mindfulness

Find mindfulness, intention setting, and emotional awareness videos for kids on [GoNoodle](#).

Backyard Nature Activities

Head [here](#) or [here](#) for science you can do from home.

Toads

Listen to Alie Ward interview amphibian scientist Priya Nanjappa to learn all about toads [here](#).



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