



# Study guide

## and lesson plan activities

This study guide includes information about our production along with creative activities to help you make connections in your classroom both before and after the show. We've aligned all activities to both the Common Core Standards and North Carolina Essential Standards. Look for the symbol below throughout the guide for curriculum connections.



NCES-TheatreArts.(K-5).TA.A.1: Analyze literary texts and performances. NCES-TheatreArts.(K-5).TA.A.1.1: Recall the basic parts of a story, such as characters, setting, and events.



Music by Robert Reale

Book and lyrics by Willie Reale

Based on the books by Arnold Lobel

Directed and Choreographed by Ron Chisolm

### About our theatre

Founded in 1948, Children's Theatre of Charlotte has opened young minds to the wonders of live theatre for more than half a century. Today, it continues to be one of the most technically imaginative and resourceful theatres in the country. Annually, it reaches nearly 300,000 young people and their families through our Mainstage productions, Resident Touring Company and its Education Department's classes and workshops. Children's Theatre of Charlotte shares a space with the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library at **ImaginOn: The Joe and Joan Martin Center**. Learn more about Children's Theatre of Charlotte at [ctcharlotte.org](http://ctcharlotte.org).

### Synopsis

It's Spring! Frog wakes up from winter hibernation, but Toad would rather sleep till May. When he finally wakes up, he decides to plant a garden. He is impatient, wanting the seeds to grow right away. Frog tells Toad to wait and his seeds will grow. Soon they do. Toad is very excited, except he has no mail. So, Frog writes him a letter and asks Snail to deliver it. Now, Spring has turned to Summer. Frog and Toad decide to go for a swim. Toad thinks he looks funny in his bathing suit, and he tries to slip unseen into the water. But the animals come to look at Toad in his suit, where everyone laughs at him. After the swim, Toad decides to invite Frog on a picnic, but finds a note on Frog's door that says he has gone away to be alone. Toad is afraid Frog is upset with him, and goes out to find him. He discovers Frog has just gone away to think of the things that make him happy—and the happiest is having Toad for a friend! Snail continues on his quest to deliver the letter to Toad. The leaves change colors, and now it is Fall. In the cool weather, Frog and Toad do all kinds of fun things together: bake cookies, fly kites, and rake leaves. One night, Frog decides to tell Toad a ghost story of the "Large and Terrible Frog." Toad is scared, but feels better when the story has a happy ending. Winter arrives, and Frog and Toad go sledding. Frog falls off the sled, which sends Toad on a dangerous and bumpy path. Toad is angry that Frog made him sled down the steep hill. Snail finally arrives with the letter that Frog had sent to Toad months earlier. The letter says how Frog is only happy when his friend Toad is happy. Toad forgives Frog, and Snail is proud to have delivered his first letter! They celebrate one more time on Christmas Eve, even though Frog is a little late because he was wrapping Toad's Christmas present. It is time yet again for hibernation, and another year ends for Frog and Toad.

### THEMES EXPLORED

friendship, seasons, celebrating differences,  
music

## Discussion questions

1. Frog and Toad are the best of friends. What qualities make a good friend? Who is your good friend? How did the two of you meet each other?
2. When Toad tried to plant a garden, he wanted the seeds to grow immediately! Toad was being impatient. Frog told Toad to wait. What are the qualities of waiting? Why do we sometimes need to wait for things?
3. Watch the stop motion version of *Frog and Toad Together* by John Clark Matthews provided at the link listed below. How are the stories the same from the musical version? How are they different?

[johnclarkmatthews.com/watch-frog\\_and\\_toad\\_together.php](http://johnclarkmatthews.com/watch-frog_and_toad_together.php)

4. In the play, Frog tells Toad a scary story about the “Large and Terrible Frog.” They say that they are not afraid. How do they know? What can make you afraid? What can you do to feel brave?
5. In the play, Frog and Toad eat so many cookies that they fear they will become sick. Is there something that you like to eat or drink so much that you can’t stop yourself, even when you fear that you will get sick? If you know that eating so much of something will make you sick, why do you continue to eat it?



CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.(K-5).2: Ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media. NCES-HealthEd.(K-2).MEH.1: Understand the relationship among healthy expression of emotions, mental health, and healthy behavior.

## Buttons! Buttons!

Start the lesson by reading the entire story of *Frog and Toad Are Friends*. Then, distribute bags of buttons to small groups of students. Direct them to empty the bags onto their tables. Reread the story, stopping after each description Toad provides to allow students to eliminate buttons that couldn't possibly be Toad's. At the conclusion of the reading, one button should remain. Ask students to describe the remaining button. Distribute copies of the “Buttons! Buttons!” Activity Sheet to the students provided by [illuminations.nctm.org](http://illuminations.nctm.org).

### Buttons! Buttons! Activity Sheet

Direct students to cross off buttons that Toad says are not his after carefully reading each of the clues at the top of the page. After the final clue is read, one button that is not crossed off should remain on the activity sheet.

Ask students to describe the remaining button in the space provided. Encourage students to discuss how they eliminated groups of buttons; for example, if the button is not black, it must be white. Check the activity sheet by rereading the story.

After checking the activity sheet, provide students with a collection of buttons. Ask them to choose one of the buttons secretly and hold a class discussion to help others guess which button they have selected.

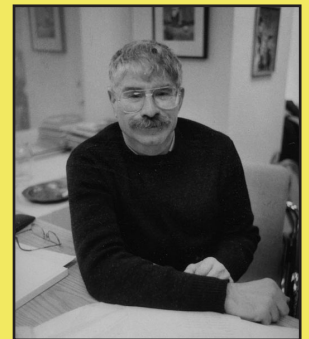
Students can create a similar set of clues and have other students determine which buttons should be eliminated and which one button would remain.



CCSS.Math-K.CC.C.6: Identify whether the number of objects in one group is greater than, less than, or equal to the number of objects in another group, e.g., by using matching and counting strategies. CCSS.Math-K.MD.B.3: Classify objects into given categories; count the numbers of objects in each category and sort the categories by count.

### ABOUT 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.

### WHAT DO YOUR PARENT'S DO?

Adrienne was very much involved in her father's work. Think about what one of your parents do for a living. Can you think of a way to show them you appreciate what he or she does? You could draw a picture, write a poem, or play a song to show that person you care.



NCES-TheatreArts.(K-5).TA.AC.2: Use performance to communicate ideas and feelings. NCES-HealthEd.(K-5). ICR.1: Understand healthy and effective interpersonal communication and relationships.

## Differences between frogs and toads

Although many people believe that frogs and toads are completely different creatures, the truth is a bit more complicated. Frogs and toads are both members of the same class — *Amphibia* — which means that they're both amphibians. Amphibians are cold-blooded vertebrates that spend the early part of their lives in water breathing with gills and the rest of their lives on land breathing with lungs.

Moreover, frogs and toads are also both members of the same order — *Anura* — which means they're closely related and share many similar characteristics. The popular distinction drawn between frogs and toads is probably best viewed as a distinction between true "frogs" (members of the *Ranidae* family) and true "toads" (members of the *Bufo* family). Here are some of the differences you may notice:

### Frogs:

- Need to live near water to survive.
- Have smooth, moist skin that may look or seem slimy.
- Have a narrow body with round eyes that bulge.
- Have long hind legs that help them take long, high jumps.
- Have many predators.

### Toads:

- Don't need to live near water to survive.
- Have rough, dry, bumpy skin.
- Have a wide body with oval eyes that don't bulge.
- Have short hind legs to take small hops rather than jumps.
- Have few predators because their skin has a bitter taste and smell.

Before you become too confident in your ability to distinguish frogs from toads, though, remember that these differences don't hold true across all species. Do some research with your class, and see how many more differences you can find between the two groups. List them on the board or on a chart. Can you find any more similarities?



NCES-Science.K.L.1: Compare characteristics of animals that make them alike and different from other animals and nonliving things.  
NCES-Inf./Tech.(K-5).TT.1.1: Use a variety of technology tools to gather data and information (e.g., online communication tools, etc.).

## Vocabulary enrichment

**hibernation** *n.* an inactive state, especially in winter

**deliver** *v.* to bring or transport to the proper place or person

**refreshing** *adj.* pleasingly fresh or different

**hubbub** *n.* a confusing situation

**indisputable** *adj.* beyond doubt, undeniable

**surprise** *v.* to discover suddenly, without warning

**stroll** *n.* a leisurely walk

**leisurely** *adj.* done without haste, slowly

**lurks** *v.* to wait out of view, sneak



CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.(K-5).4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases.

## Happiness collage

In *A Year with Frog and Toad*, Frog takes some time to be alone and think of all the things that make him happy. Ask your students what makes them happy. Using pictures from magazines and pictures they draw themselves, have them create a collage of all the things that make them really happy. Hang them up in your room to remind them everyday of these wonderful things! Notice what things they have in common with other students in the class. What things are different?



NCES-VisualArts.(K-5).VA.V.3: Create art using a variety of tools, media, and processes, safely and appropriately.

I cannot think of any work that could be more agreeable and fun than making books for children.  
- Arnold Lobel

## A walk in the park

In the show, you get to spend a whole year with Frog and Toad! The year is divided into seasons. Discuss the seasons and how they change the weather outside with your students. Tell them they are going to take a walk around the room as though they are walking through a park. As they are walking, announce these changes in the weather and season. Ask them to react to these changes.

"It's spring. It is sunny and bright; the flowers have just started to bloom. Can you smell the flowers? Oh no, a spring rain! Do you have an umbrella? Is it cold rain or warm rain? Now it is changing from spring to summer. It starts to get very hot. The sun is brighter now. How does that affect the way you move? Are you going slower or faster? Find some shade and have a cool drink. The leaves are starting to change colors, it's becoming fall. The leaves are dropping from the trees. Rake them up before the wind blows them all away. The wind is blowing harder now, winter is coming. Put your coats because snow is falling. Catch a snowflake on your tongue. Next, let's have a snowball fight!"



NCES-TheatreArts.(K-5).TA.AC.2: Use performance to communicate ideas and feelings.

If you enjoyed the show, travel to **ImaginOn** or your local **Charlotte Mecklenberg library branch** and check out these books. Check availability at [cmlibrary.org](http://cmlibrary.org).

### Recommended for Early Readers

#### **Alien and Possum Are Friends No Matter What**

by **Tony Johnston**

Possum and Alien become friends and find that they have both similarities and differences.

#### **My Friend Rabbit**

by **Eric Rohmann**

Something always seems to go wrong when Rabbit is around, but Mouse lets him play with his toy plane anyway because he is his good friend.

#### **A Splendid Friend, Indeed**

by **Suzanne Bloom**

When a studious polar bear meets an inquisitive goose, they learn to be friends.

#### **Gossie and Gertie**

by **Olivier Dunrea**

Gossie and Gertie are best friends and everywhere Gossie goes, Gertie goes too— except when she doesn't, and sometimes that's even better.

### Recommended for Elementary

#### **BFG**

by **Roald Dahl**

Snatched from her orphanage by a BFG (Big Friendly Giant), who spends his life blowing happy dreams to children, Sophie concocts with him a plan to save the world from nine other “man-gobbling cannybull” giants.

#### **The Friendship**

by **Midred D. Taylor**

Four children witness a confrontation between an elderly black man and a white storekeeper in rural Mississippi in the 1930s.

Every play produced by Children's Theatre of Charlotte is created by a talented team of designers, technicians, actors and a director. A play is different from a television show or a movie because it's presented live. As a class, discuss what you experienced when you saw the performance.

## **THEATER CORNER**

1. What was the first thing you noticed on the stage?
2. Name three things you noticed about the set. Did the set help tell the story? What sort of set would you have designed?
3. What did you like about the costumes? Did they fit the story? What sort of costumes would you have designed?
4. What role did lighting play in telling the story? How did the lights enhance what you were seeing?
5. Talk about the actors. Were there moments you were so caught up in the story that you forgot you were watching a play?
6. Were there any actors who played more than one character? What are some ways that you can be the same person but play different characters?



NCES-TheatreArts.(K-5).TA.A.1: Analyze literary texts and performances. NCES-TheatreArts.(K-5).TA.AE.1.2: Understand how costumes [and technical elements] enhance dramatic play.



## **Write to Us!**

Children's Theatre of Charlotte  
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CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.(K-5).1: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

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[www.ncarts.org](http://www.ncarts.org)