A Year With Frog and Toad

Music by Robert Reale
Book and Lyrics by Willie Reale

Based on the books by Arnold Lobel
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

---

**Table of Contents**

| Welcome Letter               | 2 |
| Plot Synopsis                | 3 |
| The Creators                 | 4 |
| From Page to Stage           | 5 |
| Pre-Show Activities          | 6 |
| Post-Show Curriculum Connections | 7-8 |
| Student Pages                | 9-11 |

---

Study Guide Written by Marty Johnson
Study Guide Designed and Produced by iTheatrics

*A Year With Frog and Toad TYA* Study Guide © 2007
© 2004 Frog and Toad Company LLC and Fratelli Reale Music
Unauthorized duplication is prohibited by law.

MTI’s TYA and MTI’s TYA Collection are trademarks of Music Theatre International.
All rights reserved.
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).
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 Children's 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.

Robert Reale (Music)

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.
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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Song</th>
<th>Story</th>
<th>Book</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Spring&quot;</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>Frog and Toad Are Friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Seeds&quot;</td>
<td>The Garden</td>
<td>Frog and Toad Together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;The Letter #1&quot;</td>
<td>The Letter</td>
<td>Frog and Toad Are Friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Getta Loada Toad&quot;</td>
<td>A Swim</td>
<td>Frog and Toad Are Friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Alone&quot;</td>
<td>Alone</td>
<td>Days With Frog and Toad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Cookies&quot;</td>
<td>Cookies</td>
<td>Frog and Toad Together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;The Kite&quot;</td>
<td>The Kite</td>
<td>Days With Frog and Toad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;He’ll Never Know&quot;</td>
<td>The Surprise</td>
<td>Frog and Toad All Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Down the Hill&quot;</td>
<td>Shivers</td>
<td>Days With Frog and Toad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Toad to the Rescue&quot;</td>
<td>Down the Hill</td>
<td>Frog and Toad All Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Merry Almost Christmas&quot;</td>
<td>Christmas Eve</td>
<td>Frog and Toad All Year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

**Frog and Toad Are Friends**
- Spring
- A Swim
- The Letter

**Frog and Toad All Year**
- Down the Hill
- The Surprise
- Christmas Eve

**Frog and Toad Together**
- The Garden
- Cookies

**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.**
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)
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)

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)

MATHMATICS

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

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)
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.

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 are sad and sometimes they get angry, but in the end 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 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.

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
A Year With Frog and Toad Word Search

Seasons  Characters  Stories
Fall      Birds       Snail     Alone
Spring    Frog        Squirrel  Cookies
Summer   Lizard      Toad      Shivers
Winter   Mouse       Turtle    The Kite