

Study Guide



**A
Year
With**

Frog and Toad

March 5, 2010

**Music by Robert Reale
Book and Lyrics by Willie Reale
Based on the book by Arnold Lobel**

Study Guide Includes Activities Recommended for Grades K-2



**THE PEACE CENTER
FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS**

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THE PEACE CENTER
FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

Dear Teacher,

Welcome to another exciting season at The Peace Center for the Performing Arts! Thank you for your interest in and support of the Peace Outreach Program performance series!

Every show being presented is curriculum based and designed to be educational as well as entertaining. The purpose of this study guide is to help your students learn as much as possible from the show. Included you will find background information on the show, resources and supporting materials, pre/post performance activities, and lesson plans designed to meet South Carolina Curriculum Standards.

If you have any questions or need additional assistance in preparing your students for this performance, please don't hesitate to contact us at (864) 467-3007. Thank you very much for your support of education and the arts.

We look forward to seeing you at the theatre!



Academic Standards

The following South Carolina academic standards are addressed in this study guide. Specific indicators are listed with corresponding lessons.

Language Arts/Writing: Grades K: The student will begin to read and comprehend a variety of literary texts in print and nonprint formats. The student will begin to access and use information from a variety of sources. **Grades 1-2:** The student will read and comprehend a variety of literary texts in print and nonprint formats. The student will access and use information from a variety of sources.

Music: Grades K-2: The student will evaluate music and music performances.

Theatre: Grades K-2: The student will act by developing basic acting skills to portray characters who interact in improvised and scripted scenes. The student will analyze, evaluate, and construct meanings from improvised and scripted scenes and from theatre, film, television, and electronic media productions.

Visual Art: Grades K-2: The student will understand and apply media, techniques and processes.

For more information on upcoming performances, please visit:
http://www.peacecenter.org/education_outreach/show_listing.php

If you have any further questions, please contact Marjorie Buckner at
mbuckner@peacecenter.org

About this Performance

A Year With Frog and Toad is a musical based on the loveable children's stories written by Arnold Lobel. The musical follows two friends, cheerful Frog and grumpy Toad, through the four seasons. Arnold Lobel's daughter, Adrienne Lobel, designed the set for the show based on her father's stories. The show began its run on Broadway in 2003, and was nominated for 3 Tony Awards—including best musical.



Synopsis

A Year with Frog and Toad follows two best friends, Frog and Toad, and their adventures together through the four seasons. The show opens in the spring with Frog and Toad waking from hibernation. Toad plants a garden, but becomes impatient when the seeds do not grow right away. He sings a song in an effort to encourage the seeds to grow more quickly. The next day, Frog discovers that Toad never gets mail. Frog writes a letter to Toad and asks Snail to deliver it. The two friends then go swimming in the pond, but Toad is embarrassed to be seen in his bathing suit.

When Frog leaves Toad a note that he has gone to an island and wants to be left alone, Toad becomes worried that Frog is sad. He brings Frog lunch, and discovers that Frog is happy and just wanted some time alone to think. Later, the two friends make dinner and eat cookies that were supposed to be saved for dessert. They then fly a kite together, experiencing some difficulty at first. At the end of summer, leaves are all over the ground. Frog and Toad decide to surprise each other by raking each other's yards, but the squirrels come and ruin their neat piles. When a storm comes, Frog tells Toad a scary story about a young frog who escapes from a large terrible frog. Meanwhile, Snail continues on his journey to deliver Frog's letter.

In the winter, Frog and Toad go sledding. Toad becomes angry at Frog when he ends up sledding down a steep hill by himself after Frog has fallen off. Later, Toad finally receives Frog's letter from Snail, who is proud to have delivered first letter. In the letter, Frog tells Toad that he is only happy when Toad is happy, and Toad forgives his friend. On Christmas Eve, Frog is running late, which worries Toad. When Frog arrives, he explains that he was late because he was wrapping Toad's present. The two friends then prepare to hibernate for the winter. The musical ends with the birds announcing that it's almost spring again, and Frog and Toad get ready to begin another year together.

Before the Performance

The Peace Center strongly encourages participation and preparation for our performances. We ask that you share with students guidelines for proper theatre behavior, as well as introductory information on this performance. Teachers can further enhance students' experiences through pre- and post-performance discussions and activities. Some ideas are included in this study guide.

Activity One: Introduce Frog and Toad

- Familiarize your students with *Frog and Toad* books.
 - The musical your students will see is based directly from stories included in the *Frog and Toad* book series. Below is a list of stories from each of the *Frog and Toad* books that are included in the performance. Encourage your students to read, or read to your students one (or more) of the following:
 - ~*Frog and Toad are Friends*
 - Stories: *Spring, A Swim, The Letter*
 - ~*Frog and Toad Together*
 - Stories: *The Garden, Cookies*
 - ~*Frog and Toad all Year*
 - Stories: *Down the Hill, The Surprise, Christmas Eve*
 - ~*Days with Frog and Toad*
 - Stories: *The Kite, Shivers, Alone*

Activity Two: What is a Musical?

- Tell your students that this performance of *A Year with Frog and Toad* is a musical. Explain that a **musical** is a performance that combines music, songs, dialogue, and dance to tell a story. Ask your students if they have ever seen a musical. Do they have a favorite musical? If so, which one, and why?



During the Performance

Providing students with specific things to look for in advance will help them organize their thinking during the performance as well as recall what they have seen during post-performance discussion and activities. Before attending the performance, read the list below to your students. Ask them to pay attention to these things because you will be talking about them after the show.

Things to Look For

- Explain to your students that there are no human characters in this story. All of the actors play animal roles. **Watch** what the actors do to act like, or suggest the animals they are playing. Are they wearing costumes or makeup to make them look like the animals they are playing? Do they move like the animals? Do they use their voices to sound like the animals?
- Explain to students that many actors in this performance will “double,” which means they will play more than one character. **Watch** to see which actors double as more than one character. What do they change about themselves so that you know which character they are playing?
- Tell your students that this performance takes place over the course of an entire year. That means at different points throughout the performance, the scenery and props will be designed to represent spring, summer, fall, or winter. Ask your students to **look** at the scenery and props used throughout the performance. Do they help them to know when the seasons have changed?

Props are items that can be handled by an actor in a stage production.

Scenery refers to anything used to create the setting for a theatrical production. Examples of scenery are painted backdrops or constructed platforms.

- Review with your students that a **musical** is a performance that combines music, songs, dialogue, and dance to tell a story. Ask them to **listen** for the music and songs included in the performance.



After the Performance

Students who visit The Peace Center leave with an elevated level of excitement and enthusiasm, and it is often after the show that the real learning begins. You and your class have had a shared experience, and it is in the reflection of this that you will learn the different kinds of responses the show elicited. Sharing these responses enhances students' learning and helps them broaden their perceptions and hone their evaluative skills, affirming or challenging what they think.

Activity One: Discussion of the Performance

- Lead a discussion with students about the performance. Ask the following questions:
 - 1) What was your favorite part of the musical, and why?
 - 2) If you had time to read one of the books from the *Frog and Toad* series listed in pre-performance Activity One, ask your students to name any similarities they noticed between the books and the musical. Did they notice any differences?
 - 3) What did the actors do to act like, or suggest the animals they were playing? Did they wear costumes or makeup to look like the animals they were playing? Did they move like animals? Did they use their voices to sound like animals?
 - 4) Did you notice if any of the actors doubled as other characters? What did they change about themselves to let you know which character they were playing?
 - 5) Did you like the music and songs that you heard in the performance? Do you think the songs helped to tell the story? Why or why not?

Activity Two: Activities in All Four Seasons

- Frog and Toad shared many experiences together in each of the four seasons. Ask your students to think of their favorite activity to do with a friend in each of the four seasons (spring, summer, fall, winter).
- Tell your students you would like for them to draw one picture of their favorite activity to do with a friend for each of the four seasons.
- Before they begin drawing, lead a discussion to help them think about what they might include in their pictures to show each season. Ask them the following questions:
 - 1) What are some activities you can do in the spring?
Summer? Fall? Winter?
 - 2) What colors do we usually see outside in the spring?
Summer? Fall? Winter?
 - 3) What did the scenery look like in the performance of *A Year with Frog and Toad* during the spring? Summer? Fall? Winter?
 - 4) What props did you see in the *Frog and Toad* performance during each of the four seasons?
- Have your students share their pictures with the class.



Language Arts, Visual Arts, and Drama Lesson: Acting like Animals!

Time: 2 class periods

Materials: Paper plates, construction paper, crayons, glue, various art supplies

Curriculum Standards: **English Language Arts:** Grades K-2: The student will create responses to literary texts through a variety of methods (K-1.8; 1-1.8; 2-1.7). Grade K: The student will recognize that information can be found in print sources and nonprint sources (K-6.2). Grade 1: The student will use print sources of information and nonprint sources to access information (1-6.2). Grade 2: The student will use a variety of print sources and nonprint sources to access information (2-6.2).

Visual Art: Grade K: The student will begin to identify connections between the visual arts and content areas across the curriculum (K, VI, B). Grade 1: The student will identify connections between the visual arts and content areas across the curriculum (1,VI, B). Grade 2: The student will identify connections among the visual arts, other art disciplines, and content areas across the curriculum (2,VI, B).

Theatre: Grades K-2: The student will demonstrate physical traits of humans, animals, and objects (K, II, A/B; 1-2, II, A/B). The student will perform in group (ensemble) dramatizations (K, II, E; 1-2, II, E).

Objective: Students will research one animal from *A Year with Frog and Toad*, create masks designed to represent that animal, and create movements and sounds like that animal.

Procedure:

- 1) Write the following list of animals in seen in *A Year with Frog and Toad* on the board: frog, toad, bird, mouse, squirrel, mole.
- 2) Tell students that it is their turn to be the actors! They are going to pretend to be these animals!
- 3) Assign each student to an animal (frog, toad, bird, mouse, squirrel, mole). There will be more than one student assigned to each character.
- 4) As a group, discuss each animal in the *Frog and Toad* performance. Ask the following questions about each animal:
 - a) Can you think of any words that describe what the animal looked like (e.g., furry, green)?
 - b) How did the animal move (e.g., slow, quick)?
 - c) What did the animal sound like (e.g., loud, quiet, squeaky)?
- 5) Tell your students that they are going to decorate paper plate masks designed to represent their assigned animals. First, they are going to do a little more research on their animals.
- 6) Take your students on a trip to the library. Put them in groups according to the animal they have been assigned. Help each group find books on their assigned animals. Encourage students to look at pictures of their assigned animals. Help your students find information on how their animals move and sound. Depending on the grade level, you may either need to read this information to your students or allow them to read independently.
- 7) After your students have spent time researching their animals, it is time to create their masks. Tell your students their goal is to make their masks look as real as possible. They may use what they learned from their research to help them.

Making the Masks

- 1) First, cut two circles out of the paper plate for eyes.
 - 2) Decorate the paper plate to resemble the assigned character. If desired, cut shapes out of construction paper for ears, nose, etc.
 - 3) Using a hole punch, make two holes on either side of the plate. Tie a piece of string to each hole. Place on the head of each child and tie strings together to fit the mask.
- 8) After they have made their masks, have your students get into groups according to the animal they have been assigned. Have them discuss as a group what they learned about the way their animals move and sound. Have them practice moving like their animals and making noises to sound like their animals.
 - 9) Tell your students it is time for their performance! Have each group come to the front of the room, one at a time. Have them move around and make noises like their animals while wearing their masks.



Study Guide Survey

Our goal is to provide you with study guides that will help your students learn as much as possible from each Peace Outreach Program performance. Your feedback is important to us, as it will help us create study guides that will be the most beneficial to you and your students. Please fill out the following survey to the best of your ability. You may refuse to answer any question. Thank you for your time and help.

1) Grade level(s) you currently teach:

_____K _____1st _____2nd

2) Your gender: _____ Male _____ Female

3) What related arts courses do you teach (check all that apply)?

_____Band _____Choir _____Dance _____Drama _____Orchestra _____Visual Arts

4) What did you like about this study guide?

5) Was there anything that you disliked about this study guide?

6) What did you find most useful about this study guide?

7) Was there any information that you expected to be included, but didn't see?

8) Do you have any suggestions for improving the quality of this study guide?

**Please mail surveys to:
The Peace Center
Department of Community Engagement and Learning
101 West Broad Street, Greenville, SC 29601**