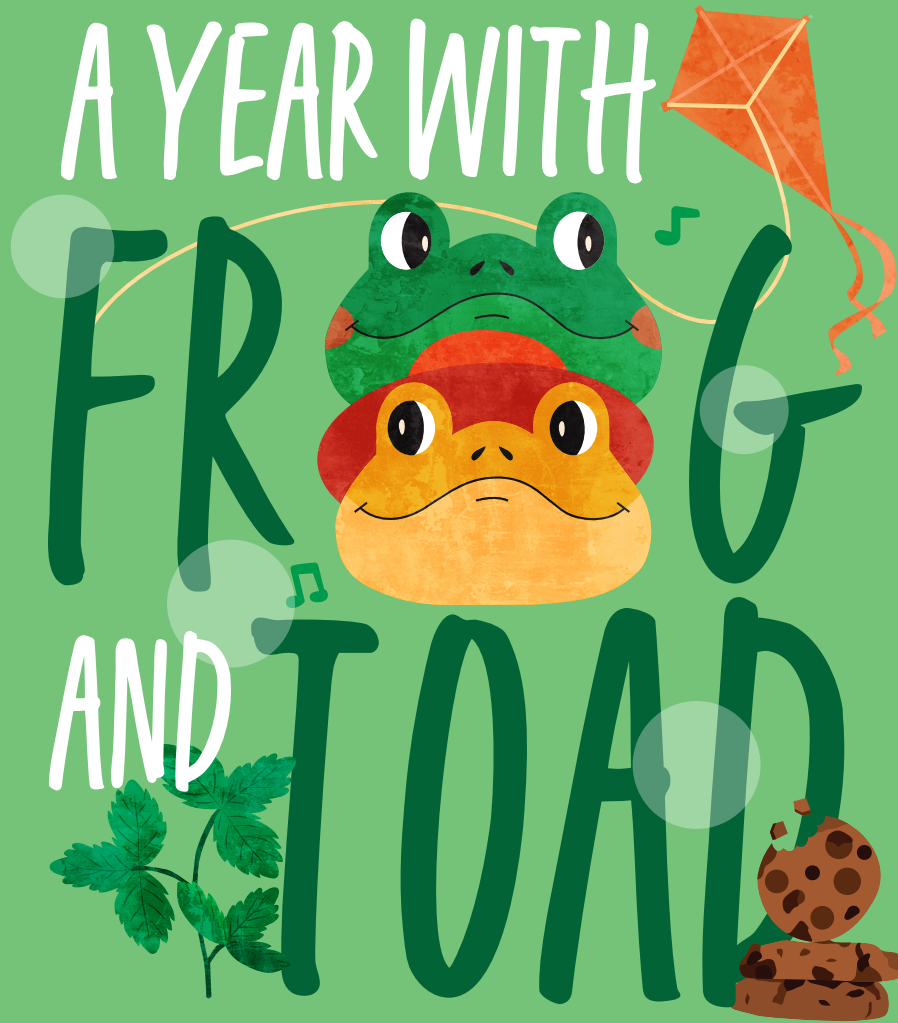


A Year With Frog and Toad Audience Guide



2023-2024 Season

children's
theatre
company

TABLE of CONTENTS



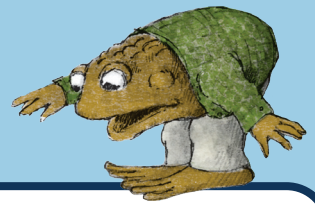
Summary and Content Advisories.....	p.3
Behind the Scenes.....	p.4
ACTIVITY: Cool Words.....	p.7
ACTIVITY: Create a Happiness Collage.....	p.8
ACTIVITY: 3 Things to Look and Listen For.....	p.9
ACTIVITY: Write a Letter.....	p.10
Heading to CTC.....	p.11
Full Plot Description.....	p.12

At CTC, our mission is to create extraordinary theatre experiences that educate, challenge, and inspire young people and their communities. This Audience Guide is just one of the ways in which we aim to enhance your experience and further your engagement with the shows on stage.

It includes a summary, context, fun facts, and activities plus details that can help you decide what's right for your kids.

If you have any further questions, please contact our friendly Ticket Office Associates at 612.874.0400 during their regular business hours or email them at tickets@childrenstheatre.org.

Summary



Summary

Waking from hibernation in the spring, Frog and Toad plant gardens, swim, rake leaves, go sledding, and learn life lessons along the way. The two best friends celebrate and rejoice in their differences that make them unique and special. Part vaudeville, part make believe, all charm, *A Year With Frog and Toad* tells the story of a friendship that endures, weathering all seasons.



Content Advisories

Themes and Situations: 1 out of 5 stars ★☆☆☆☆

Turtle and friends sing about Toad looking funny in a bathing suit. Toad worries Frog doesn't want to be his friend anymore. Birds laugh at Toad as he tries to fly a kite.

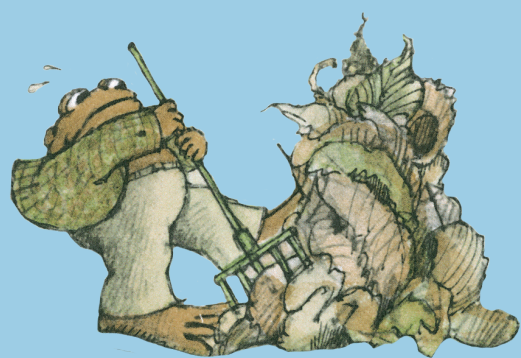
Sensory Advisories: 1 out of 5 stars ★☆☆☆☆

There's the potential for loud sounds when Toad smashes his alarm clock, falls off Turtle into the water, plays the tuba, and is catapulted from the sled.

Potentially Anxious Moments: 2 out of 5 stars ★★☆☆☆

Turtle and friends sing about Toad looking funny in a bathing suit and wait around to 'getta loada Toad' even though Toad wants them to leave. Toad worries Frog does not want to be his friend anymore. In the song *Shivers*, Frog recalls a scary story where he got lost with his family after a picnic and met a terrible green frog who wanted to eat him. Toad rides a sled on a dangerous path and is catapulted into a snowbank.

Please contact tickets@childrenstheatre.org with any questions.





About Arnold Lobel

When Arnold Lobel was growing up in Schenectady, New York, he was out of school and sick through most of second grade. One of the ways he kept himself occupied was by drawing. Somewhat hesitant about returning to school, he used his animal drawings to make friends with his classmates. It has been said that his sets of books about animal friends, such as *Frog and Toad*, were based on these experiences.

His health improved, and upon graduating high school, he decided to improve his artistic skills and attended Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, where he focused on illustration and met his future wife Anita, a talented illustrator. They settled in Brooklyn and had two children Adrienne and Adam. The Prospect Park Zoo was right across the meadow from their apartment, and the family would go there often to observe and enjoy the animals.

Lobel's books are warm, funny tales of love and friendship, most featuring animals as the main characters. His book *Frog and Toad* was a Caldecott honor book in 1971. *Frog and Toad* was just the beginning of a long list of early readers written and illustrated by this talented man. Like the first book, the others are made up of short chapters and contain lovable, though slightly wacky, characters.

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. "I cannot think of any work that could be more agreeable and fun than making books for children," Lobel has said. He died in 1987 leaving a legacy of almost 100 books that he had written and illustrated.



A pen and ink self-portrait



About A Year With Frog and Toad

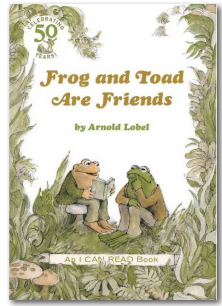
History

A Year With Frog and Toad was workshopped in 2000 at New York Stage and Film at Vassar before it was produced at Children's Theatre of Minneapolis. After sold-out runs, the production moved to Broadway where it ran for 88 performances. It received three Tony® nominations: Best Musical, Best Score, and Best Book. Following a national tour, it is now performed regularly by theatres and schools around the country. What you'll see is Children's Theatre Company's Original Production.

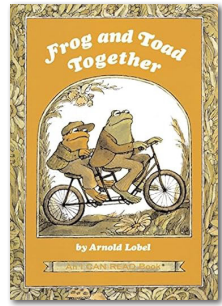
Stories

A Year With Frog and Toad is about friendship. It emphasizes an important reality we all live with: people who are different can make very good friends. It's made up of a combination of adventures gleaned from four of Arnold Lobel's prize-winning Frog and Toad books: *Frog and Toad Are Friends*, *Frog and Toad Together*, *Days with Frog and Toad*, and *Frog and Toad all Year*.

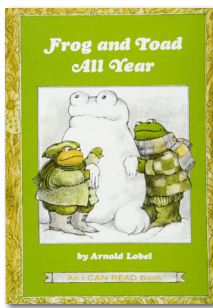
Frog and Toad Are Friends
Spring, A Swim, The Letter



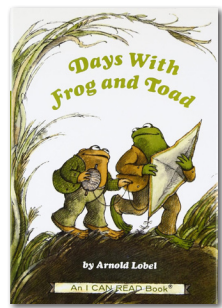
Frog and Toad Together
The Garden, Cookies



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



Days With Frog and Toad
The Kite, Shivers, Alone



Music

A Year With Frog and Toad is filled with music! There are many moods, as there are several seasons in the world, and in friendship. By turns, the music is light and jazzy, sweet and soothing, and absolutely spunky. Sometimes it is ragtime, Dixieland, hoedown...it is delightfully varied and feels good. The actors sing A LOT—to one another, about one another, and together. Their emotions are often much too large for simple spoken words to suffice.

About Frogs and Toads

Frog and Toad have a lot in common...just like real frogs and toads. Frogs and toads are amphibians. The word amphibian means double life. Frogs and toads live two lives because they start their lives in the water as tadpoles. After developing lungs and growing legs, they can breathe air and move around on land.

Frogs and toads are cold-blooded—their body temperature changes with the air around them. Frogs and toads are carnivores. They eat other animals, including a variety of insects, such as flies and ants, as well as spiders and worms. Some larger frogs and toads even eat mice.

Frog and Toad are different...just like real frogs and toads.



Frogs

- Need to live near water
- Have smooth, moist skin
- Have a narrow body
- Have higher, rounder, bulgier eyes
- Have long hind legs
- Take long high jumps
- Have many predators
- Have teeth in their top jaw
- Lay eggs in clusters



Toads

- Do not need to live near water
- Have rough, dry, bumpy skin
- Have a wider body than frogs
- Have low, football shaped eyes
- Have short hind legs
- Run or take small hops rather than jump
- Do not have many predators
- Do not have teeth
- Lay eggs in chains



Cool Words from *A Year With Frog and Toad*



Get a jump start on some fun words that may be new to you, pick your favorites, and then find ways to use them in your everyday language to amaze your friends!

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

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 fun 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



Which 4 words do you like most?

Write your own sentence using each of the 4 words you picked:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____



Create a 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.

What makes you happy?

Create a collage of all the things that make you happy by drawing your own pictures or using pictures from magazines.

3 Things to Look and Listen for During the Performance

Look for...

1. A letter in an envelope. Who is the letter for?
2. Ingredients to bake cookies. What kind of cookies are being made?
3. A calendar. How many months are in one year?

Listen for...

1. An alarm clock ringing. What makes the alarm clock stop?
2. Water rushing on a river. Who is nervous to go swimming in the river?
3. Wind blowing. Which character is trying to fly a kite in the wind?



Write a Letter

Frog is a very good friend to Toad. He decides to write Toad a very important letter because Toad never has received one. Even though Frog and Toad see each other regularly, he knew it would make Toad feel very special to receive a letter.

Your family and friends would love to receive a handwritten letter from you, too! Even though we have the ability to text, email, and share pictures online and on our phones, a handwritten letter is very special.

Brainstorm topic ideas to include in the letter.

1. What is something you've done recently that you enjoyed doing? Share about it!
2. Ask about how their family, friends, or pets are doing.
3. Tell them about a school project that you are working on or one you recently completed.
4. Ask them if they have any fun weekend or holiday plans coming up.
5. What is something you want to do with them the next time you see them?

Parts of a Friendly Letter

Greeting

Dear _____

Date _____

Heading


Body

Closing

Signature

Your friend, _____

Your name _____







CTC Theatre Etiquette

At CTC, we encourage audiences to engage with the live theatre experience and react freely. It's ok to laugh if something is funny, exclaim if something is surprising, gasp if something is scary, and maybe even dance along in your seats if the music inspires you. We value the real-time, honest reactions of our audiences.

We do, however, thank you for your partnership in making sure that any reactions from your kids are kind and respectful towards the actors onstage and towards all of the people who worked so hard to make the show possible.

Accessibility

Mobility Accessibility

The Target Lobby and UnitedHealth Group Stage are on the 2nd floor. At the building entrance, turn right and head through the Mia (Minneapolis Institute of Art) entrance. Then turn left just inside the entrance and go up the flight of 28 stairs to get to the lobby. Or you can use the elevator to the LEFT of the entrance doors. The balcony is accessed by going up another flight of 18 stairs. There is no elevator access to the balcony level.

An Accessible/All-Gender restroom is located next to the elevator on the 2nd floor in the Target Lobby. Additional restrooms are located down one floor near the entrance to the theatre.

Quiet Room/Sensory Sensitivities

The Quiet Room is located at the rear left side of the main floor of the UnitedHealth Group Stage. There are 3 stairs to get to the seating in the Quiet Room. The Quiet Room is separated from the audience by a glass window, so patrons can verbalize freely. Those utilizing the Quiet Room can still see and hear the performance. The performance is also live streamed in the lobby. Please feel free to come and go from the Quiet Room as you need to throughout the show.

Please let an usher know if someone in your group would benefit from a fidget, ear plugs, noise canceling headphones, or coloring/activity sheets during your visit.

Assistive Listening Devices

Please let an usher know if you would like to use an assistive listening device. These devices come equipped with an over-the-ear earpiece. This earpiece can be unplugged, and other devices, such as cochlear implants, can be plugged into the receiver using the 1/8" jack. If you will be plugging in your own device, please bring the appropriate cord as CTC does not have these on hand.

Sign Interpretation and Audio Description

Each CTC production has a sign interpreted and/or audio described performance for each production. These performances are noted in the [list of performance dates](#).

Prayer/Private Nursing Space

During your visit, please ask a member of our staff to use our private space for nursing, pumping, prayer, or other needs.



THIS IS A COMPLETE DESCRIPTION OF THE PLAY, SO IT IS FULL OF SPOILERS.

Act One

The Birds have come back at the end of winter and are anxiously ready for spring. They look in on Frog and Toad, still in hibernation in their respective beds in their cozy home. In sleep, Frog and Toad dream about their friendship and all they will do in the brand-new year (“A Year With Frog and Toad”).

Frog finally wakes to realize it is spring, and therefore time to wake up his friend Toad. Toad is hesitant and, after breaking his alarm clock in anger, tells Frog to wake him up in another month. Frog rips the month off of his calendar and tells Toad that the time has passed (“It’s Spring”). Toad finally gets out of bed, and decides that this year he wants to plant a garden; Frog gives him seeds and some advice to help them grow. Toad finishes his planting but quickly becomes impatient when they don’t immediately grow. Toad tries yelling at the seeds, but Frog tells him that now they will be afraid to grow. Toad feels bad, so he stays up all night trying other methods to convince the seeds to grow (“Seeds”).

Toad falls asleep in front of the garden and when Frog comes to wake him up in the morning, they see the seeds have grown a little. Toad is happy for a moment, but instantly becomes sad when he realizes that it is ten o’clock. He explains to Frog that ten o’clock is when the mail comes but he never gets any mail! Hearing this, Frog excuses himself and goes to write a letter for Toad. He gives it to Snail to mail it for him and Snail sets off on his mission (“The Letter #1”).

Eventually, Frog and Toad go to the pond for a swim but when it comes time to swim, Toad asks Frog to turn away while he gets into the water. Frog inquires and Toad explains that he looks funny in a bathing suit. Frog promises not to look until Toad is in the water. When it’s time to get out, Turtle comes by and Toad tells Frog to ask her to go away. Frog asks her, but instead she finds this amusing and calls over Lizard and Mouse to see Toad in his bathing suit. After getting cold, Toad decides to get out of the water as the onlookers laugh about him and his suit (“Getta Loada Toad”).

The next day, Toad goes to Frog’s house to surprise him with lunch but finds that Frog isn’t home. There is a note on the door that says he went to the island and wishes to be left alone. Toad worries and goes to the island in search of Frog, during which he falls in the water and ruins lunch, but Frog doesn’t mind. Frog explains that he isn’t sad, he’s happy. He just wanted alone time to reflect on how happy it makes him to be a frog on such a beautiful day (“Alone”). Meanwhile, Snail is still on his way to deliver Frog’s letter to Toad and is very happy to be doing the job (“The Letter #2”).

Frog and Toad are now at Toad’s house preparing dinner. They make cookies for dessert. When they go to try them, however, they can’t stop eating them because they are so good! In hopes of stopping, the two tie the cookies in a box...to no avail. They end up giving the rest of the cookies to the birds so that they won’t eat all of them by themselves (“Cookies”).

Full Plot Description cont.



Act Two

Frog and Toad are trying to fly a kite, but they can't get it to stay in the air. The birds watch nearby and laugh at their attempts. Toad wants to give up, but Frog continues to encourage him and finally they get the kite to fly ("The Kite").

It's now the end of the summer, and as autumn comes leaves begin to cover the ground ("Leaves: A Year With Frog and Toad"). Frog and Toad decide to secretly rake each other's yard as a favor. They find that it's hard work ("He'll Never Know"). When they are going back home after finishing, squirrels come and mess up the piles of leaves, ruining all the work they've done. They both get home and decide to rake their own yard later, never knowing the good deed they've done for each other ("He'll Never Know [Reprise]").

Later, on a dark and stormy night, Toad heads over to Frog's house. Frog thinks that it's a good night to tell a scary story; Toad is already nervous from the weather, but Frog goes on telling him the story of a young frog who gets separated from his parents and then escapes the clutches of the Large Terrible Frog before it eats him ("Shivers"). Meanwhile, Snail is still making his way to Toad's to deliver Frog's letter ("The Letter #3").

It is now winter, and Frog and Toad are getting ready to sled down a hill though Toad is scared. Frog continues to assure him that it will be okay. Partway down the hill, Frog is thrown from the sled—leaving Toad all alone. Toad doesn't know what to do and accidentally takes the dangerous and bumpy path ("Down The Hill"). Toad eventually makes it to the bottom, but is angry at Frog for making him go sledding. He swears he will never talk to Frog again. Just as Toad is about to leave, Snail appears with his letter from Frog. Toad reads the letter wherein Frog talks about their good friendship and that he cannot be happy unless Toad is happy. Toad decides to talk to Frog again and invites him home for soup. Snail, having delivered his first letter, feels as though he has finally done something to be proud of ("I'm Coming Out Of My Shell").

It's now Christmas Eve, and Toad is in his kitchen waiting for Frog. He begins to get worried because Frog is late, and starts to think something terrible has happened to him. He goes out in search of Frog ("Toad To The Rescue"). Frog arrives just as Toad is leaving and apologizes for being late, explaining that he was wrapping Toad's present. Toad opens the gift and it seems to be a new clock. Toad tells Frog that Snail is delivering his present and it should be there soon; the two reflect on what a lovely Christmas Eve it is and how glad they are to be together ("Merry Almost Christmas").

It is now almost Spring again. Frog and Toad are in hibernation. The birds return and look in on Frog and Toad dreaming. In their dreams, the two talk about what lovely things they have been thinking about and how excited they are for another new year together ("Finale: A Year With Frog And Toad").

From Music Theatre International: <https://mtishows.com/full-synopsis/1285#sthash.dpRkcEzl.dpu>