



Nashville
Children's
Theatre

CURRICULUM GUIDE

A Year with Frog & Toad TYA

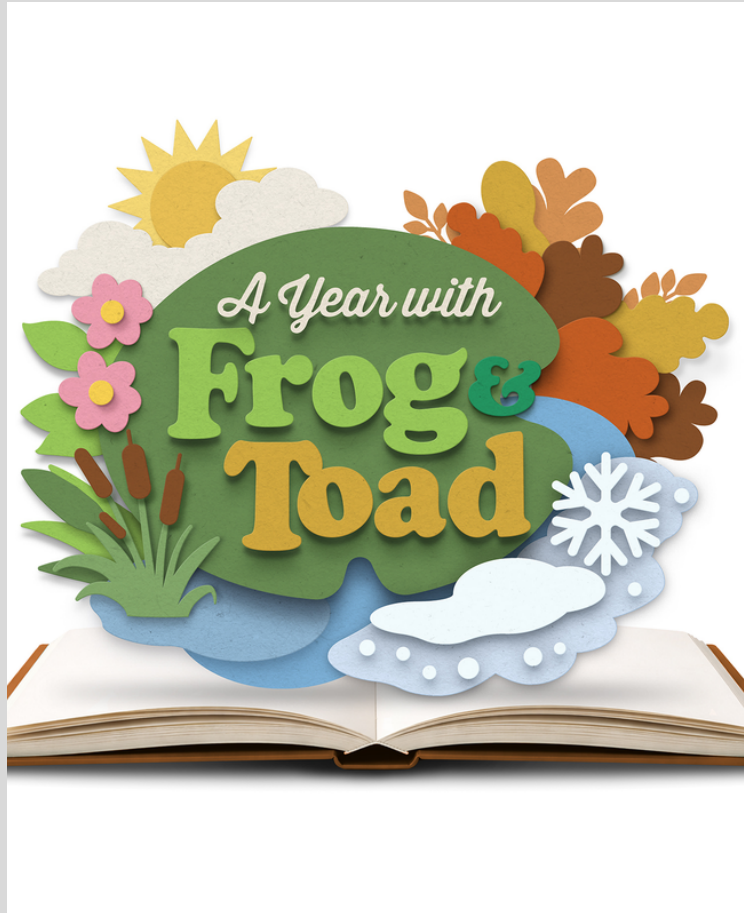
Book and Lyrics by Willie Reale
Music by Robert Reale
Based on the Books by Arnold Lobel

Presented through special
arrangement with Music Theatre
International (MTI)
New York, NY

September 19 -
October 28, 2026



Clock icons show
15-minute
increments and
reflect the minimum
time needed. Actual
timing may vary. A
fully shaded clock
means the activity
may include
homework or span
multiple class
sessions.



In This Guide:

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Look For These!

Subject area icons show what curricular topics each activity addresses.



ELA



THEATRE



SCIENCE



SEL



VISUAL ARTS

Tennessee State Standards for all activities are on page 12.

Visit NashvilleCT.org today!

Know Before You Go

A hit on Broadway, *A Year with Frog and Toad* was nominated for three Tony Awards – including Best Musical. Based on Arnold Lobel's well-loved books, and featuring a hummable score by Robert and Willie Reale, this whimsical show follows two great friends – the cheerful, popular Frog and the rather grumpy Toad – through four fun-filled seasons. The two best friends celebrate and rejoice in the 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 throughout the seasons.

Know Before You Go Tips & Info

NCT provides guidance to help schools and families prepare students for their theatre experience. Each category is rated on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 indicating a small amount and 5 indicating a larger presence. These tips are designed to support your planning, but we recognize that every classroom and student is different. We encourage teachers and caregivers to use their own judgment in deciding what best meets the needs of their students. Note: Our Education Staff will continue to update these tips on the NCT website, as aspects of the production may evolve during the rehearsal process.

- **Language: 2 out of 5** - There is some teasing and bullying about how Toad looks in a bathing suit.
- **Violence and Scariness: 3 out of 5** - Frog tells Toad a scary story about a “scary terrible frog.” There is a sledding trip where Frog gets thrown off and Toad goes down a tricky path. Toad thinks Frog has gotten lost. All events work out with a happy ending.
- **Sensory Advisories: 3 out of 5** - This is a musical and thus, there may be times where the music gets loud. There are theatrical effects, involving big sound and lighting throughout the show.
- **Potentially Anxious Moments: 2 out of 5** - Themes of loneliness, being misunderstood, and frustration are included, but the story resolves with feelings of friendship and inclusion.
- **Other Things to Know:** This play is based on the works of Arnold Lobel, specifically *Frog and Toad are Friends*, *Frog and Toad Together*, *Frog and Toad All Year*, and *Days with Frog and Toad*. There will not be an intermission.

First performed in 2002, *A Year with Frog and Toad* brings all the beloved *Frog and Toad* adventure books to life. The show was commissioned by Adrienne Lobel, the author's daughter, so audiences could experience the lovable characters live. One of the first children's theatre pieces brought to Broadway, this musical encourages viewers of all ages to slow down and appreciate the little moments in life that make our world special.

This curriculum guide connects *A Year with Frog and Toad* to ELA and STEAM learning through interdisciplinary lessons that inspire creativity and critical thinking. Students will engage in activities that help them develop skills across multiple subjects while celebrating the joyful spirit of Arnold Lobel's stories.

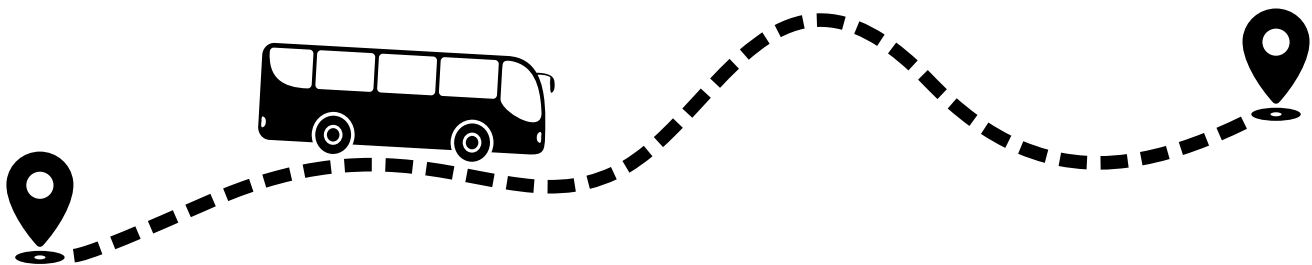
Together, these lessons encourage students to connect with their community, explore the world around them, and leave places better than they found them.



Know Before You Go

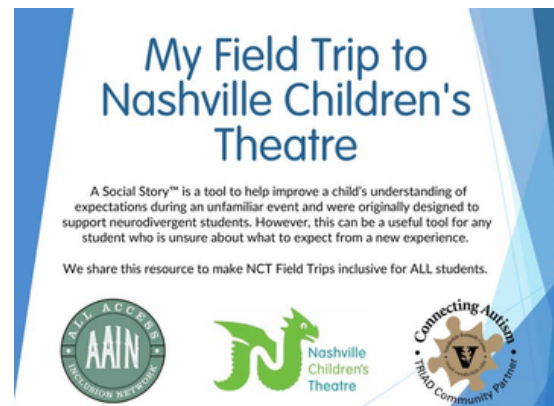
Arriving at the Theatre

- Please arrive 20–30 minutes before your scheduled show time. Allow extra time for traffic. We are unable to delay the start of the performance.
- Check in at the box office. A representative from your school should check in at the box office upon entering the building.
- If arriving by bus: Please remain on the bus until an NCT staff member approaches your driver. They will provide parking instructions and help your group exit and enter the theatre.
- If arriving by car: Use caution when parking and entering, as buses may be unloading. Once your full group has arrived, notify an NCT staff member, and they will escort you to your seating section. If the front lot is full, additional parking is available in the lots beside and behind the building (Howard Office Building Campus) and on the street.



Social Story

NCT creates a Social Story™ for all shows, camps, classes, and field trips. A Social Story is a tool to help someone prepare for an unfamiliar event and was originally designed to support people who are neurodivergent. However, this can be a useful tool for anyone who is unsure about what to expect from a new experience. We are sharing these resources to make NCT shows inclusive for ALL patrons. You can find the Social Story and read about other inclusive practices at: <https://nashvillechildrenstheatre.org/edi-policies/>.



Sensory Room

NCT has a space in the back of the theatre dedicated to providing a safe, comfortable place for students and adults alike to self-regulate. In the room, you can view the performance, control the sound, and access sensory-friendly tools.



Theatre Etiquette

Share the following definition and info with your students. The Social Story™ described on page 2 is also a great tool!

etiquette: the customary code of behavior in society or among members of a particular profession or group.

It takes many, many people and lots and lots of work to create a show on stage. Some are crew working behind the scenes and some are the actors who perform on stage right in front of you. They are all working to put on the best performance possible for you and everyone else in the audience.

Unlike watching television or a movie, the performers and the crew can see and hear the audience members. That's why it's the audience's job to watch and listen carefully to the action onstage, and to show their support by laughing and clapping at the right moments. The audience helps the performers and crew to concentrate on doing their job when we practice the rules of theatre etiquette.

Dos and Don'ts:

- **Do** listen to the people giving instructions when you arrive. These staff members are part of the show, too, and they will help you know where to go and what to do.
- **Do** laugh if the show is funny, and clap after songs and at the end of the show. When you react to what's happening onstage, you show the performers that you appreciate their hard work.
- **Don't** talk during the performance. Whispering is still talking, so make sure you are only speaking in an emergency.
- **Don't** eat, drink, or chew gum in the theatre. It can make a mess that's hard to clean up, and also distract other people trying to watch the show.
- **Do** stay in your seat for the entire show, and keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself. Standing up will block someone else's view, and it's no fun to have your seat kicked by the person behind you!
- **Don't** use cell phones or other electronics during the show. This one is for the grown ups! You may think you're just checking it for a moment, but those glowing screens are a major distraction for everyone. Trust us...we can all see your screens.



Theatre Etiquette Worksheet

Hand out the worksheet on page 9. As a class, go through the different event locations listed on the worksheet and discuss each event. What can you do there? What can't you do there? Why? Fill out the worksheet using A (Always), S (Sometimes), and N (Never). Ask students why they think we behave differently at these different places.

[Adapted from The Louisville Orchestra](#)



Bravo! 🎉

Pre & Post Show Activities

Books make for great theatre! Many playwrights, lyricists, composers, and screenwriters transform some of our favorite stories into wonderful plays, musicals, or movies. When adapting a story, however, often changes are made to plot, characters, etc. Sometimes these changes are made to accommodate timing (the length of the play) and the many elements that are involved in bringing a book to life (such as set, costumes, cast, etc.).

Definitions to share with your students

- **Adaptation** - something that is changed so it can be presented in another form. This musical is adapted from the books by Arnold Lobel.
- **Playwright** - a person who writes plays
- **Author** - a person who writes something such as a book or an article
- **Lyricist** - a person who writes the words of a song
- **Composer** - a person who writes music



Pre-Show Discussion

Read one or more the *Frog and Toad* books with your students. Recommended titles connected to *A Year with Frog and Toad* include *Frog and Toad are Friends* and *Frog and Toad All Year*.

- What makes the *Frog and Toad* books so memorable? Think about the rhythm, characters, and illustrations. Why do these stories stick with us?
- Why do you think the creators turned the *Frog and Toad* books into a musical instead of a regular play? What can music, song, and movement add to a story?
- What might be challenging about bringing this world to life on stage? Consider costumes, sets, and the way characters move and speak.
- *A Year with Frog and Toad* combines many different stories into one big musical. Why do you think the writers chose to do that?
- What might be fun—or tricky—about mixing characters and plots from different books?



After the Show: Theatre Review Worksheet

Once your class has attended NCT's production, ask your students to reflect on the performance using one of the grade-appropriate Theatre Review worksheets at the end of this guide. Once students have completed their reviews, use the prompts from the worksheet to lead a class discussion.

- Optional: ask students to write letters (or draw pictures) to the actors and artists here at NCT! We LOVE getting mail and reading your questions, favorite parts of the show, and more! Letters can be sent to: Nashville Children's Theatre, 25 Middleton St., Nashville, TN 37210 or emailed to: info@nashvillect.org

Bonus Discussion

A Year with Frog and Toad is part of Nashville Children's Theatre's 2026-27 season, themed "From Page to Stage." A season is a group of scheduled productions connected by a central idea or theme. Ask your students: Why do people turn books into plays and musicals? How can actors help bring a story to life? Why do you think NCT chose "From Page to Stage" as their theme this year?



ELA Connections

Letter Writing with Frog & Toad



Frog and Toad are best friends, so it makes Frog sad when Toad is upset that he never gets any mail. This activity invites you to explore how kindness and community can grow through simple acts like writing a letter. Just like Frog and Toad, you'll practice being a thoughtful friend by sharing encouragement, questions, stories, and imagination with others. As you read, write, and create together, you'll discover how letters can help people feel connected, cared for, and part of a community.

Materials:

- *Frog and Toad are Friends*, "The Letter" - by Arnold Lobel
- Paper or a Printable Letter Template
- Crayons, Markers, Pencils
- Envelopes and Postage (optional)
- Mailbox Prop or Basket (optional)

Part 1: Engage - Why are Small Acts of Kindness Important?

Begin by reading or summarizing "The Letter" from *Frog and Toad are Friends*. Discuss the following questions with the class:

- Why was Toad sad?
- Why did Frog write a letter?
- How can letters make people feel special?
- Have you ever received a letter or card?

Part 2: Discover - What Makes a Good Letter?

Provide an example of a letter to the class. Together, discuss the different components. Things to highlight could include:

- Introduction or Greeting
- Clear and Interesting Topics
- Personality in the Writing
- Questions for the Reader to Respond To
- Closing Salutation
- General Formatting (Address Lines, Spacing, etc.)

Part 3: Brainstorm - Who, What, and Why?

Discuss with your students to who and why you are writing letters. The following ideas can be tailored to your class's age:

- Write a friendly letter to Frog or Toad asking them about their adventures.
- Imagine you are Frog wanting to cheer up Toad. Write a letter inviting Toad to a picnic, sharing exciting news, or apologizing for a disagreement.
- Choose an important person in your life. Write them a letter to explain why they are special to you, to thank them, or to cheer them up.
- Research a group or organization in your community (ex. retirement community, hospital, school, etc.). Write them a friendly letter telling them about what you are learning, thanking them for the work they do, or just to cheer them up!

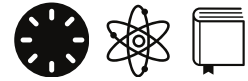
Part 4: Writing - Craft a Wonderful Letter!

After finalizing your prompt, provide students with paper or a template and writing supplies and have them get busy!

Optional Extensions: Have students seal their letters in an envelope and then place them in the mailbox prop. If the letters are addressed to Frog or Toad, consider "delivering" the letters to different students in the class to read and respond to. If the letters are addressed to real people in the community, consider sending them as a pleasant surprise! For older students, have the class research community leaders to whom they can send ideas, petitions, and questions.

STEAM Connections

Toad's Garden Lab



In many Frog and Toad series stories, Frog and Toad spend time outdoors exploring nature together. In this science project, you will become nature scientists by planting a seed, observing how it grows, and recording changes over time in a special garden journal.

Materials:

- *Frog and Toad Together*, "The Garden" - by Arnold Lobel
- Small Cups or Pots
- Potting Soil
- Seeds (beans, sunflowers, or peas work well)
- Water
- Popsicle Sticks or Plant Labels
- Journals or Journaling Pages
- Pencils, Crayons, and Markers
- Rulers
- Camera (Optional)
- Magnifying Glass (Optional)
- Stickers, Gems, Paints for Decorating Pots (Optional)

Part 1: Engage – How Do Plants Grow?

Begin by reading or summarizing "The Garden" from *Frog and Toad Together*. Discuss the following questions with the class:

- What do plants need to grow?
- Why is patience important when growing something?
- How do Frog and Toad take care of each other and their environment?

Part 2: Explore & Engineer – Design a Mini Garden

Consider having students decorate their cups or pots. Then, walk students through the process of planting and watering a seed. Make sure to label each pot clearly so students can keep track of their plant.

Part 3: Observe & Record – Garden Journaling

Introduce the Garden Journals to your students. This is where they will record their daily or weekly observations of their plants. Some things to include are:

- Day 1 Predictions (What will the plant look like? How tall will it grow? How many days will it take to sprout?)
- Plant Height Chart
- Number of Leaves
- Color Changes
- Watering Schedule
- Drawings or Pictures of Progress
- Notes on Plant Life Cycles

Consider providing sentence starters to encourage deeper analysis: Today my sprout looks...; I noticed...; My plant needs...

Part 4: Evaluate & Reflect - What Did You Learn?

Once plants have sprouted, celebrate! Be mindful of individual progress and be prepared to have encouraging conversations with students about how each plant takes its own time - it is not a race or competition. Then, have students reflect upon the process in their Garden Journals or aloud:

- What surprised you about your plant?
- What was the hardest thing about caring for it?
- Why is patience important in science and in nature?

Optional Presentation Extension: Have students create a trifold board presentation documenting their process, progress, and findings. Print before, during, and after photos to display in a Garden Gallery exhibit. Invite families to view the garden. For older students, have them research community gardens or teach the process to younger students.

STEAM Connections



Frog or Toad? Habitat Investigation

Frog and Toad may be the best of friends, but real frogs and toads have many differences! In this science activity, you will become amphibian explorers by investigating how frogs and toads look, move, and live in different habitats.

Materials:

- *Frog and Toad are Friends*, "Spring" - by Arnold Lobel
- Pictures, Models, or Videos of Frogs and Toads and Their Habitats
- Chart Paper or Venn Diagram Worksheet
- Crayons, Scissors, Glue

Part 1: Engage - Read and Discuss

Begin by reading or summarizing "Spring" from *Frog and Toad are Friends*. Discuss the following questions with the class:

- What differences do you notice between Frog and Toad?
- Where do you think each animal likes to live?
- Why might different animals need different homes?
- Frogs and toads look very similar. What do you think causes them to be different?

Part 2: Research & Observe - Amphibian Investigation and Habitat Hunt

Read or show students images, models, or videos about real frogs and toads. Have students make observations about the following characteristics:

- Skin Texture
- Body Shape
- Leg Length
- Color Patterns
- Foot Shape

Next, read or show students images, models, or videos about different habitats: ponds, forests, wetlands, gardens, logs and muddy areas. After learning about each habitat, have students categorize them as best for frogs, toads, or both. Be sure to have volunteers share out their thought process along the way.

Part 3: Analyze - Frog vs Toad Chart

Now, have students summarize their learning in a comparison chart or Venn diagram. Students can work independently, in pairs or small groups, or as a class depending on your needs and time. Possible categories to compare and contrast are: Skin, Habitat, Sounds, Eggs, and Color.

Part 4: Reflect - Froggy Findings

Discuss the following questions with the class:

- Why do frogs and toads need different habitats?
- How do their bodies help them survive?
- What surprised you most?
- How are Frog and Toad different but still good friends?

Optional Presentation Extension: Have students create an informational poster comparing and contrasting frogs, toads, and their environment that can be displayed around the school. Have students label the amphibians' different physical features and provide information and examples of the best habitat for each. Students can draw their models, cut and paste printed images, or use digital creation tools. Students can present their posters to other classes, teachers and staff, and families or community members.

Optional Field Work Extension: Contact your nearest zoo, park or nature conservatory, college, or veterinarian to see if they have amphibian exhibits and activities your students could experience.

IT'S SHOWTIME! - Theatre Etiquette Activity

INSTRUCTIONS: Look at the different events listed across the first row in the table below. For each event, write an A for ALWAYS, S for SOMETIMES, or N for NEVER with the listed behavior expectations. Note the different behavior expectations there are for different events we attend.

					
BEHAVIOR	SPORTS GAME	RELIGIOUS SERVICE	LIVE THEATRE PERFORMANCE	ROCK CONCERT	MOVIE THEATER
 CHEER					
 CLAP POLITELY					
 TALKING TO OTHERS					
 EATING					
 STANDING & WALKING					

Adapted from: <http://www.louisvilleorchestra.org/wp-content/uploads/audience-etiquette-activity.pdf> , <http://www.musical-theater-kids.com/theater-etiquette.html>, <https://www.firststage.org/media/dwoc34e0/snowy-day-eg-2019-20.pdf>

Name: _ _ _ _ _



★ My Theatre Review ★

I saw _ _ _ _ _ at Nashville Children's
(name of show)

Theatre on _ _ _ _ _ , _ _ _ _ _
(date of show)

My favorite part was...

**Write or draw your responses in the boxes below.*

The play made me feel...

I learned...

Name: _ _ _ _ _



Theatre Review

Show title: _____ Date of show: _____

Playwright(s): _____ Director: _____

1. What was the play about? What was its message?

2. Who was your favorite character/actor? Why?

3. What did you think of the visual aspects (costumes, set, lighting, etc.)?

4. How did the play make you feel? Why?

5. Why should people see this play?

Additional comments:

Use the back or separate sheet of paper if needed.

Writing a Theatre Review

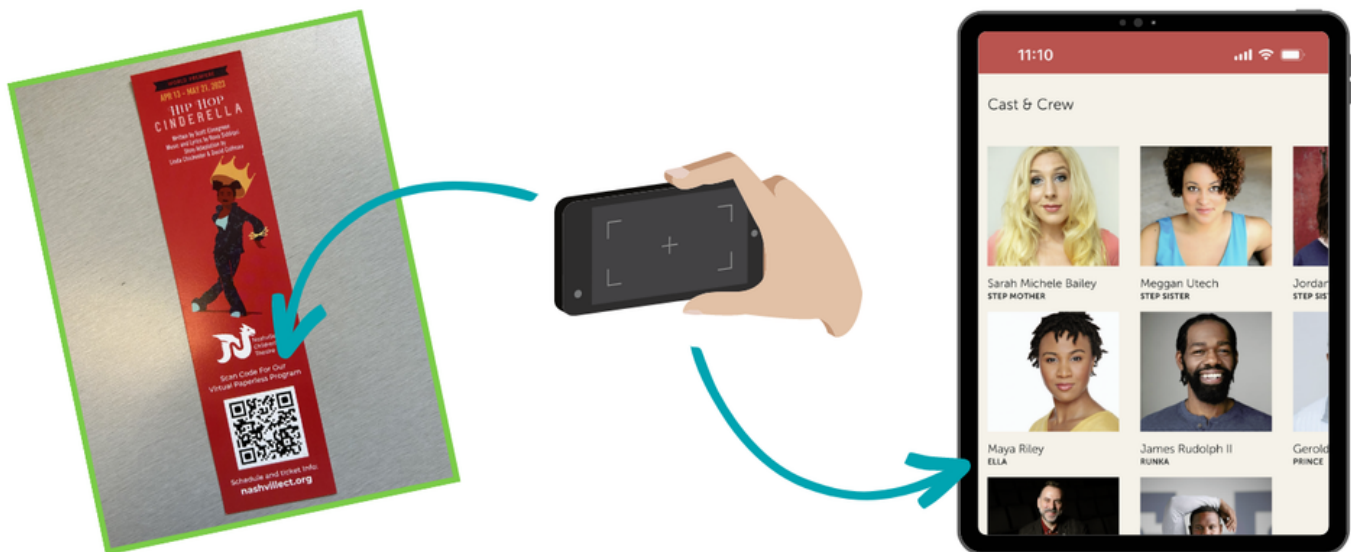


A "review" of a performance is a carefully-crafted piece of writing typically featured in the news of an individual's opinions about a show being performed in the community. Most theatre reviewers or "critics" are well-versed in theatre. From the review, readers should get a sense of what the play is about in addition to the reviewer's personal judgments of the play's many aspects including, but not limited to, the acting and design.

After seeing a production at Nashville Children's Theatre, write your own review of the performance. Follow the structure below to help craft your critique.

- **First Paragraph:** Exciting opening/introduction
- **Second Paragraph:** Brief summary of the plot of the show
- **Third Paragraph:** Your opinions on the acting
- **Fourth Paragraph:** Your opinions on the visual/design aspects of the show (costumes, set, lighting, props, etc.)
- **Fifth Paragraph:** Final reactions/conclusion

Make sure to mention show specifics such as listing the director, actors, and designers by name. Reference the show's Virtual Paperless Program, the program listing the show's details, for names. (The QR code is on the bookmark you should have received after the show.) In addition, the more descriptive you are with your opinions, the stronger the critique will be.



TN Academic Standards Grades K-8

Page 4

Pre-Show Discussion
ELA: SL.CC.1, RL.RRTC.10
Theatre: 2-5.T.R1.A

Pages 5

Letter Writing with Frog & Toad
ELA: RL.K/1.1-3, W.K/1.3, SL.K/1.1-3, L.K/1.1-2, W.2.3, W.2.5, SL.2.1-3, L.2.2, W.3.3, W.3.4, W.3.5, SL.3.1-3

Pages 6-7

Toad's Garden Lab
Science: 1.LS1.1, 1.LS1.2, 2.LS2.1, 2.LS4.1
ELA: W.K-3.2, W.K-3.7, SL.K-3.1, SL.K-3.4

Frog Or Toad? Habitat Investigation

Science: 1.LS1.1, 1.LS1.2, 2.LS4.1, 3.LS4.2
ELA: RI.K-3.1, RI.K-3.9, W.K-3.2, SL.K-3.1

Pages 8-11

After the Show
Theatre: 1/6/8.TR2.A, 4-5.T.R1.A, 6/8.T.R2.C, 6-8.T.R3.A, 3/6-8.T.R3.B
ELA: 2-4.RL.KID.2, 1.RL.KID.3, 1-2.W.RBPK.8, W.PDW.4, W.RW.10
Visual Arts: VA.Cr1.B
SEL: 1A.1, 1C.1

Just seeing the performance? See the standards below.

Theatre: T.R1.A, T.R2.A
ELA: SL.CC.2, 4.RL.IK1.7; 3.RL.IK1.9; K-1.FL.PA.2; K-1.FL.VA.7; RL.RRTC.10 [if book(s) are read]
SEL: 1A; 3A; 3-8.3B.2; K-5.4B.3; 6-8.4B.1-2; K-2.5A.1; 3-5.5A.3; 6-8.FA.4; K-2.5B.2
Music: GM.R3.A; GM.R2.A
Dance: 4.D.R1.A; K-4.D.R2.A

Note: The academic standards listed reflect potential connections students may make simply by attending the performance. These are not exhaustive. Depending on how teachers prepare for or reflect on the experience with their students, additional standards may be addressed—or some listed here may not apply to every classroom.



Info for Teachers

\$15 Educator Preview

A Year with Frog and Toad TYA

September 18, 2026

Reception/Workshop: 5:00

Dress Rehearsal: 6:30

Enjoy wine and cheese as you are introduced to activities you can use in your classroom. To reserve a spot visit NashvilleCT.org or contact Maddie, mmahood@nashvillechildrenstheatre.org. Event qualifies as 3 credits of Professional Development. Childcare provided.

Questions regarding field trips and school offerings? Contact Justin, jgunn@nashvillect.org.

Seeing an NCT performance, as well as the activities in this guide, help students build the 4 C's of 21st Century Learning: Communication, Creativity, Collaboration, and Critical Thinking!

To schedule a workshop with one of NCT's Teaching Artists, contact Maddie, mmahood@nashvillechildrenstheatre.org.

Nashville Children's Theatre creates artistic experiences for everyone.

Theatre can change the world, one audience at a time. Our performances help kids process real-world situations and build a foundation of empathy for their relationships and actions, now and in the future. And that means a better, kinder world for everyone.

NCT is proud to acknowledge the government agencies, foundations, and business partners that provide leadership support:



Ellen Lawson Foundation