# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## PART I: THE PLAY
- The Characters .................................................. 3
- The Story and Songs ........................................... 3
- The Creators ..................................................... 4
- Meet the Author: Arnold Lobel .............................. 4
- Article: The Reale Brothers talk about *Frog and Toad* .. 5
- Page to Stage ..................................................... 6

## PART II: CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

### BEFORE THE SHOW
- Questions for Discussion .................................... 7
- Words, Words, Words! ......................................... 8
- Word Search ..................................................... 8

### AFTER THE SHOW
- Questions for Discussion .................................... 9
- Activities ....................................................... 9

## PART III: AT THE THEATRE
- Welcome to the Julianne Argyros Stage ..................... 10
- Theatre Etiquette ............................................... 10
- Student Tips for Theatre Trips ............................... 10
- Programs .......................................................... 10

## PART IV: EDUCATION STATION
- California Visual and Performing Arts Framework .... 11
- Five Strands of Art Education ............................... 12
- Basic Theatre Vocabulary .................................... 13

## PART V: RESOURCES
- Books by Arnold Lobel ....................................... 14

### WEB LINKS
- Arnold Lobel .................................................. 14
- Study Guides .................................................. 14
- Frogs and Toads ............................................... 14
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 (“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.

Now that it’s morning, the seeds have begun to grow, but Toad is sad: he knows when the mail is delivered, he won’t receive 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 too 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 laugh at his expense.

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 just fine (“Alone”). Meanwhile, Snail is still delivering Frog’s letter to Toad (“The Letter #2”).

Frog and Toad are preparing dinner. They make cookies 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 they succeed (“The Kite”).

The summer ends and leaves cover the ground. Both Frog and Toad plan a surprise by secretly raking the other’s yard (“He’ll Never Know”), but as soon as they leave, the Squirrels come and mess up their neat piles. Later Frog decides to tell Toad a scary story about a Young Frog who escapes the clutches of a Large and Terrible Frog (“Shivers”). Meanwhile, Snail is still delivering Frog’s letter to Toad (“The Letter #3”).

Now it’s winter, and Frog and Toad are going sledding despite Toad’s fear (“Down the Hill”). On the way down, Frog accidentally falls off the sled and Toad ends up on a bumpy path. When Toad reaches the bottom of the hill he’s so mad at Frog that he says he’ll never talk to Frog again. Snail arrives with Frog’s letter to Toad. After reading the letter, Toad decides he will talk to Frog again. Snail, having delivered his first letter, is very proud of himself (“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 for Toad (“Merry Almost Christmas”).

With the return of winter, Frog and Toad are back in hibernation. The birds are back as well 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”).

THE CHARACTERS

Frog
Toad
Father Frog
Mother Frog
Young Frog
Large and Terrible Frog
Mouse
Snail
Turtle
Lizard
Squirrels
Birds
Moles

THE STORY AND SONGS
THE CREATORS

Robert Reale (Composer) composed the Broadway musical A Year with Frog and Toad (Tony nomination) and the off-Broadway musicals Once Around The City (Second Stage) and Quark Victory (Williamstown Theatre Festival). Plays to which he has contributed music include Richard Dresser’s Rounding Third (directed by John Rando), Diva (Williamstown Theatre Festival) and Salvation’s Moon. His film credits include PrimeTime,” “20/20,””Inside Edition,” “Out There” (theme), “Invent This” (theme), “Mugshots,” “Crime Stories,” “The System,” “The Mailman and the Pirhanna,” “Case Closed,” “Beating The Rap” and “The Royals: Dynasty or Disaster?” As composer and record producer, he has worked with Julie Andrews, Mel Torme, Sid Caesar and Imogene Coca. Outside of work, Rob is passionate about cooking, perfecting his tennis game and spending time with the production of which he’s most proud, his son Gabe.

Willie Reale (Playwright/Lyricist) wrote the book and lyrics for A Year with Frog and Toad (Children’s Theatre Company in Minneapolis and Broadway; two Tony nominations for book and lyrics). His other credits include Once Around The City (New York Stage and Film and Second Stage Theatre), Quark Victory (Williamstown Theatre Festival) and The Dinosaur Musical (Arden Theatre Company in Philadelphia). He is the founder and served as artistic director for 18 years of The 52nd Street Project, an organization that brings inner-city children together with professional theatre artists to create theatre. For the Project, he has written dozens of plays, the lyrics to hundreds of songs and “52 Pick Up,” the Project’s how-to manual. The programs of The 52nd Street Project are currently being replicated at many sites across the country and Europe. In 1994, he was awarded a MacArthur Fellowship in recognition of his ingenuity in creating theatre and theatre education programs for young people. His television credits include “Damages,” “Homicide: Life on the Streets,” “Deadline,” “Mr. Sterling,” “Keen Eddie,” “The Jury” and “Tilt.” He created a series called “Out There” for Sesame Workshop and the BBC, shot in Australia (Australian Film Institute Award, Prix Jeunesse and Writers’ Guild of America nominations) and served as head writer and co-executive producer on the team that reinvented “The Electric Company,” now airing on PBS. His film work includes Dreamgirls (lyrics to the song “Patience,” for which he received an Academy Award nomination).

MEET THE AUTHOR OF THE FROG AND TOAD BOOKS: 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 as a way 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. Lobel himself commented, “Frog and Toad are really two aspects of myself.”

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, also a talented illustrator. They settled in Brooklyn and had two children, Adrianne and Adam. The Prospect Park Zoo was right across the meadow from their apartment, and the family would go there often. These trips to the zoo gave him the idea for the Mister Muster book. He dedicated it to Anita, Adrianne and Adam. He and his wife worked in the same studio, on their own projects and on collaborations.

Lobel’s books are warm, funny tales of love and friendship and most featuring animals as the main characters. His book Frog and Toad was a Caldecott Honor book in 1971. His lighthearted yet morally instructive book Fables won the Caldecott Medal in 1981. He has also illustrated many books by other authors, including Charlotte Zolotow’s The Quarreling Book.

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 said. He died in 1987, leaving a legacy of almost 100 books that he had written or illustrated.

Biography from the Parent’s Choice Foundation.
THE REALE BROTHERS TALK ABOUT FROG AND TOAD

A Year with Frog and Toad, the family musical that has been charming audiences both young and young-at-heart all over the country, has certainly come a long way. Before the Tony nominations, before the glowing reviews, the smiling children and parents; before the quietly celebrated Broadway opening; before the sold-out runs at Off-Broadway’s New Victory Theater and in Minnesota—before all that there were the brothers Rob and Willie Reale.

Willie and Rob, its authors, both Tony-nominated for the book and score, have been savoring the experience.

“For me, the idea of sitting in a dark, empty theatre thinking of what might happen on the stage is as exciting as the idea of walking out onto the perfectly manicured grass of a baseball field and getting ready to play a game. Anything can happen in either place,” said Rob.

Frog and Toad was first envisioned by producer and set designer Adrianne Lobel, and inspired by the timeless children’s stories of her father, author Arnold Lobel. “I believe the books are extremely simple to operate and yet the underlying themes are human and sophisticated. It was our job to capture this in a full-blown stage musical,” said Willie.

Portraying the ordinary adventures of two amphibian friends during the course of one year, the musical possesses deeply human and engaging characters, clever and whimsical dialogue and catchy songs. The brothers looked to various sources for inspiration; Willie “always admired E.Y. Harburg’s funny and sophisticated lyrics for ‘The Wizard of Oz,’” while Rob’s jazzy score was influenced by the Hal Roach Orchestra and old Fred Astaire musicals. These elements have won the show a Best Musical Tony nomination, and also helped bring recognition and the Tony Award for Excellence in Regional Theatre to The Children’s Theatre Company of Minneapolis, where the show originated. Though family-friendly Broadway has largely been dominated by extravagant, ornate blockbusters like The Lion King, Frog and Toad is a gentler, more modest and intimate show, featuring a cast of five and an orchestra of eight. “The difference with our show is that we rely on more old-fashioned theatrical tricks to engage the audience. This is a low-tech enterprise and that’s just the way we like it,” said Willie. He sees the musical as a different approach to reaching a similar goal. “In the overall Broadway scene, we feel as though we are providing a really fun first experience for young theatregoers that will make them want to come back to see other shows as they grow older.”

In the end, the Reales argue that there is really only one great indication of a musical comedy’s merit. “The audiences that come out of the theatre after each show—they seem happy.”

E.Y. Harburg’s funny and sophisticated lyrics for “The Wizard of Oz,” while Rob’s jazzy score was influenced by the Hal Roach Orchestra and old Fred Astaire musicals.

Adapted from an article by Ilya Khodosh, which appeared on playbill.com on May 30, 2003.
Each of the songs and scenes in *A Year With Frog and Toad* corresponds directly to a story from Arnold Lobel’s four *Frog and Toad* books. (See Part V: Resources for a listing of books by Arnold Lobel.) These stories are strung together to fill the year that passes as the play unfolds. Below is a list of the songs from the show and the stories to which they correspond. Use this list to choose stories to read with your class before bringing them to see the production so that your students are familiar with what will be happening onstage.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SONG</th>
<th>STORY</th>
<th>BOOK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Spring”</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td><em>Frog and Toad Are Friends</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Seeds”</td>
<td>The Garden</td>
<td><em>Frog and Toad Together</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The Letter #1”</td>
<td>The Letter</td>
<td><em>Frog and Toad Are Friends</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Getta Loada Toad”</td>
<td>A Swim</td>
<td><em>Frog and Toad Are Friends</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Alone”</td>
<td>Alone</td>
<td><em>Days with Frog and Toad</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Cookies”</td>
<td>Cookies</td>
<td><em>Frog and Toad Together</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The Kite”</td>
<td>The Kite</td>
<td><em>Days with Frog and Toad</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“He’ll Never Know”</td>
<td>The Surprise</td>
<td><em>Frog and Toad All Year</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Shivers”</td>
<td>Shivers</td>
<td><em>Days with Frog and Toad</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Down the Hill”</td>
<td>Down the Hill</td>
<td><em>Frog and Toad All Year</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Toad to the Rescue”</td>
<td>Christmas Eve</td>
<td><em>Frog and Toad All Year</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Merry Almost Christmas”</td>
<td>Christmas Eve</td>
<td><em>Frog and Toad All Year</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two songs from the score do not correspond directly to a specific story in the book. The song entitled “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 to show 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 finally accomplishing the task before him.

Justin Michael Duval in SCR’s 2009 Theatre for Young Audiences production of *A Year with Frog and Toad*. Photo by Henry DiRocco.
Part II: Classroom Activities

BEFORE THE SHOW

1. Introduce Arnold Lobel’s *Frog and Toad* stories to the class by either reading aloud, or asking students to read aloud.

2. Ask students to:
   a. Identify the main events of the plot, their causes, and their effects on future actions.
   b. Discuss the traits of major characters, their motivations and contributions to the dramatic action.
   c. Identify speakers or narrators.
   d. Talk about the story’s underlying theme(s) or message.

3. Discuss the differences between realism and fantasy. Have them talk about what they like and dislike about these two literary genres, identifying universal themes, character types and actions.

4. Allow students to retell or dramatize these stories by employing different vocal tones and attitudes to explore multiple possibilities in a live performance.

5. Examine the differences between fiction and drama.

6. Explore what it means to “adapt” literature from one form to another, specifically from fiction to drama. Discuss various ways that the content of books might have to change in order to be suitable for staging, using information in the book as well as prior knowledge of the conventions of live theatre.

7. Ask students to make predictions about the play they’re going to see based upon their knowledge of the source texts, as well as other works by Arnold Lobel they may have read or seen on stage or film. For example, not every character or event in the books appears in the play. Which ones do you expect to see onstage? How do you imagine the scenery, costumes and props? Will there be music? If so, how will it sound?

8. There are only animal characters in the play. Have students brainstorm ways they think the animals will be portrayed by the actors. Remind them to consider techniques such as movement, voice, costume and makeup. Have each student pick a character and design a costume.

9. *A Year with Frog and Toad* takes place over the course of one year.
   a. Discuss the four seasons and their characteristics, especially with regard to more extreme climates in other regions of the country students may not have visited in person.
   b. Discuss how the students’ lives change from year to year. What is different from year to year? What stays the same?

10. *A Year with Frog and Toad* is about how two very different individuals can be friends. Ask students to enumerate the similarities and differences between themselves and their friends.
WORDS, WORDS, WORDS!

Listen for these vocabulary words in the play: adieu, aghast, agog, ambitious, assuming, bamboo shoot, brittle, cunningly, deliver, dialogue, dispute, escargot, exhausting, expression, flattered, furrow, generate, glen, hibernation, inconceivable, inspiring, interpretive, magnificent, ode, puckish, peril, plenitude, pollywog, rutabaga, scintilla, sphere, superior, suspect, tadpole, tedious, underrated, utter, witness.

1. _____ Glen  a. hard to believe
2. _____ Dispute b. to argue or disagree about something
3. _____ Tedious  c. better or more valuable than most people think
d. determined to succeed
5. _____ Flattered e. excellent, better than average
6. _____ Inconceivable f. a larval (young) frog or toad before it develops legs
7. _____ Underrated g. a snail that you can eat
8. _____ Tadpole h. a small, narrow valley
9. _____ Ode i. a song or poem of praise about someone
10. _____ Ambitious j. long, slow, or boring
11. _____ Escargot k. feeling honored and pleased by the nice things someone says about you

Answers: 1. h; 2. b; 3. j; 4. e; 5. k; 6. a; 7. c; 8. f; 9. i; 10. d; 11. g

WORD SEARCH

Try to find the following vocabulary words in the word search! (Words can be written horizontally, vertically, diagonally or even backwards.)

A T T E Z X Q K N D
M F L R C X E E E
B M L B U Y L T E O
I R S A B G A T E S
T X U V T R L V U V
I T O I R T T P T E
O O I E W Y E O K L
U A D C J R G R D O
S N E N I R C P E P
U E T O A Q H Z D D
N L R C J X W Y S A
N D S N O D E T M T
S E D I S P U T E E
AFTER THE SHOW

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Discuss ways in which the play differed from students’ predictions, paying special attention to the differences between written and stage versions.

2. Ask students to use the vocabulary of theatre (see Part IV of this guide) to describe the performance.
   a. How did the actors look (costumes, makeup)?
   b. How did the actors move?
   c. How did the stage look (scenery, lighting, props)?
   d. How did the play sound (music, singing, special effects)?

3. Discuss the concept of narrator and first-person storytelling. Which character(s) served as narrators in the play? Discuss how songs help to tell the story.

4. In his song at the beginning and end of the play, Frog sings that Toad is “vastly underrated.” What does that mean? Do you think it’s true? Have students support their answers with details from the play.

5. What makes Frog and Toad such good friends? Talk about their similarities and differences, and how each contributes to their friendship. How do you think their friendship could evolve over time?

ACTIVITIES

1. Give students an opportunity to create their own variations of the play and present them to the class as dramatic interpretations.
   a. Tell the story from the point of view of characters other than Frog and Toad. How would Snail tell this story? What about the Birds?
   b. Choose another ending by rewriting the last scene.
   c. Add a brand new character and see what happens.
   d. Imagine a continuation: what happens after the last scene? How might this year be different than last year for Frog, Toad and their friends?

2. Story circle – One person begins a story featuring one character from A Year with Frog and Toad and one character from another book by Arnold Lobel that students are familiar with. The first person stops after a few sentences. The next person picks up the story and continues it, then stops. The next person adds to it and so on until the tale comes to a resolution.

3. Have students imagine that they are reporters interviewing one of the characters in the play. Write and present to the class a brief newspaper article containing descriptions of concrete sensory details to support their impressions of people, places, things or experiences. Where do they live? What is their favorite season? Who are their best friends and why?

4. Ask students to come up with definitions for the additional vocabulary words listed in the “Before the Show” activities. Have students locate each of the words in the book and/or script in order to discover how context offers clues to meaning.

5. Compare actual animal characteristics and behavior with their stage versions.

LETTERS OF THANKS

Write letters of thanks to South Coast Repertory describing the most memorable aspects of attending a performance of A Year with Frog and Toad, and what they enjoyed most about their visit to SCR.

South Coast Repertory
Attn: TYA
PO Box 2197
Costa Mesa, CA 92628-2197
Part III: At The Theatre

WELCOME TO THE ARGYROS

The 336-seat Julianne Argyros Stage opened in 2002 with a huge celebration and we are delighted that thousands of Orange County school children fill this state-of-the-art facility each season to enjoy our Theatre for Young Audiences productions. The Argyros is a proscenium theatre designed to provide audiences a feeling of intimacy, with no seat more than 39 feet from the stage.

THEATRE ETIQUETTE

Theatre is an art form that depends on both the artists and the audience. A performance is influenced by an audience, just as an audience is influenced by a performance. The artists and staff of South Coast Repertory are creating a special new world for you to visit. When you walk into the theatre, you will feel that behind the curtain lies the secret of that new world which is about to come to life before your eyes. Sometimes it's so exciting, you can barely hold still. But remember that once the play begins, you have a very important job to do. Everybody in the theatre is a part of the play. You are connected to all the other people in the audience, as well as to the actors on the stage. Remember, you’re all in the same room. They can see you, hear you and feel you, just as you can see, hear and feel them. Your attention, involvement, responses and imagination are a real part of each and every performance. The play can actually be made better because of you!

STUDENT TIPS FOR THEATRE TRIPS

- Stay with your group at all times and pay attention to your teachers and chaperones.
- Listen carefully to the SCR staff member who will board your bus with last-minute tips.
- Take your seat in the theatre before going to the bathroom or getting a drink of water.
- Make yourself comfortable while keeping movement to a minimum.
- Do not stand up, walk around or put your feet on the seat in front of you.

- Absolutely no chewing gum, eating or drinking in the building.
- No backpacks, cameras or electronic devices are permitted in the theatre.
- Feel free to talk quietly in your seats before the show.
- Show your appreciation by clapping for the actors at the end of the play.
- After the lights come back up, wait for the ushers to escort your group out of the theatre.

PROGRAMS

Everyone who attends a Theatre for Young Audiences performance at SCR receives a program, also called a playbill. Patrons at weekend public performances receive their programs from the ushers upon entering the theatre. At the conclusion of each weekday matinee, teachers will be given programs for their students which can be distributed back in the classroom. In addition to the customary information about the play and the players, the program contains features and activities that students will have fun working on after the show, either in class or at home on their own.
Part IV: Education Station

Here are some of the California state standards that apply to attending this performance of *A Year with Frog and Toad* and doing the activities in this study guide.

FROM VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS:

**Theatre Content Standards for Grade Four**
For other grades, see [http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/thmain.asp](http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/thmain.asp)

**1.0 ARTISTIC PERCEPTION**

Processing, Analyzing and Responding to Sensory Information Through the Language and Skills Unique to Theatre

Students observe their environment and respond, using the elements of theatre. They also observe formal and informal works of theatre, film/video and electronic media and respond, using the vocabulary of theatre.

**Development of the Vocabulary of Theatre**

1.1 Use the vocabulary of theatre, such as plot, conflict, climax, resolution, tone, objectives, motivation and stock characters, to describe theatrical experiences.

**Comprehension and Analysis of the Elements of Theatre**

1.2 Identify a character’s objectives and motivations to explain that character’s behavior.

1.3 Demonstrate how voice (diction, pace and volume) may be used to explore multiple possibilities for a live reading. Examples: I want you to go. I want you to go. I want you to go.

**2.0 CREATIVE EXPRESSION**

Creating, Performing and Participating in Theatre

Students apply processes and skills in acting, directing, designing and script writing to create formal and informal theatre, film/videos and electronic media productions and to perform in them.

**Development of Theatrical Skills**

2.1 Demonstrate the emotional traits of a character through gesture and action.

**Creation/Invention in Theatre**

2.2 Retell or improvise stories from classroom literature in a variety of tones (gossipy, sorrowful, comic, frightened, joyful, sarcastic).

2.3 Design or create costumes, props, makeup or masks to communicate a character in formal or informal performances.

**3.0 HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT**

Understanding the Historical Contributions and Cultural Dimensions of Theatre

Students analyze the role and development of theatre, film/video and electronic media in past and present cultures throughout the world, noting diversity as it relates to theatre.
Role and Cultural Significance of Theatre

3.1 Identify theatrical or storytelling traditions in the cultures of ethnic groups throughout the history of California.

History of Theatre

3.2 Recognize key developments in the entertainment industry in California, such as the introduction of silent movies, animation, radio and television broadcasting and interactive video.

4.0 AESTHETIC VALUING

Responding to, Analyzing and Critiquing Theatrical Experiences

Students critique and derive meaning from works of theatre, film/video, electronic media and theatrical artists on the basis of aesthetic qualities.

Critical Assessment of Theatre

4.1 Develop and apply appropriate criteria or rubrics for critiquing performances as to characterization, diction, pacing, gesture and movement.

4.2 Compare and contrast the impact on the audience of theatre, film, television, radio and other media.

Derivation of Meaning from Works of Theatre

4.3 Describe students responses to a work of theatre and explain what the scriptwriter did to elicit those responses.

5.0 CONNECTIONS, RELATIONSHIPS, APPLICATIONS

Connecting and Applying What Is Learned in Theatre, Film/Video and Electronic Media to Other Art Forms and Subject Areas and to Careers

Students apply what they learn in theatre, film/video and electronic media across subject areas. They develop competencies and creative skills in problem solving, communication and time management that contribute to lifelong learning and career skills. They also learn about careers in and related to theatre.

Connections and Applications

5.1 Dramatize events in California history.

5.2 Use improvisation and dramatization to explore concepts in other content areas.

Careers and Career-Related Skills

5.3 Exhibit team identity and commitment to purpose when participating in theatrical experiences.

Emily Eiden, Erica Schindele and Justin Michael Duval in SCR’s 2009 Theatre for Young Audiences production of A Year with Frog and Toad. Photo by Henry DiRocco.
**BASIC THEATRE VOCABULARY**

**Acting** The process by which an individual interprets and performs the role of an imagined character.

**Action** The core of a theatre piece; the sense of forward movement created by the sequence of events and the physical and psychological motivations of characters.

**Ad-Lib** To improvise stage business or dialogue; to make it up as you go along.

**Apron** The area of the stage that extends toward the audience, in front of the main curtain.

**Backstage** The space behind the acting area, unseen by the audience.

**Balcony** An upper floor of seats projecting out over the main seating area of a theatre.

**Blocking** The movement and stage business, designed by the director and performed by the actors.

**Boxes** Seats separated from the main seating area located on the upper level near the stage.

**Box Office** A windowed space at the front of the theatre building where tickets are sold.

**Business** Any action performed on stage.

**Character** The role played by an actor as she or he assumes another’s identity.

**Choreography** The art of creating and arranging dances onstage.

**Conflict** The problem or incident that creates the action and is resolved by the end of the play.

**Costume** The carefully selected or specially designed clothing worn by the actors.

**Cross** The actor’s movement from one stage location to another.

**Cue** The last words or action of an actor immediately preceding the lines or business of another actor.

**Dialogue** The stage conversation between characters.

**Diction** The clarity with which words are pronounced.

**Director** The person who oversees the entire process of staging a theatrical production.

**Downstage** The part of the stage closest to the audience. At one time stages were raked, or sloped, with the lower (“down”) part closest to the audience, and the higher (“up”) part further away.

**Ensemble** A cast of actors working together effectively to present a theatrical performance.

**Flats** Canvas or wood-covered frames that are used for the walls of a stage setting.

**Green Room** A room near the stage where actors await entrance cues and receive guests. The room’s name comes from Elizabethan times, when actors waited on a real “green” (or patch of grass).

**Improvisation** The spontaneous use of movement and speech, made up by an actor to create a character.

**Lobby** The public waiting area outside the theatre space.

**Mezzanine** Lower level seating area beneath the balcony overhang.
**Monologue** A solo speech during which the character reveals personal thoughts.

**Narrator** A character who tells the story of the play directly to the audience.

**Orchestra** Lower level seating area immediately in front of the stage.

“Places” Direction given by the Stage Manager for actors to be in position before each act begins.

**Plot** The “what happens” in a story: beginning (the setting, characters, and problem); middle (how the characters work to solve the problem); and the ending (resolution of the problem).

**Project** To speak loudly so the entire audience can hear you.

**Props** All the stage furnishings, including furniture, that are physically used by the actors.

**Proscenium Stage** A traditional theatre with the audience seated in front of a proscenium arch framing the stage. SCR’s Argyros Stage is a proscenium stage.

**Run** Length of time the play will be presented (i.e two weeks, two months, two years).

**Script** The text of the play, including dialogue and stage directions, all written by the playwright.

**Set** All of the scenery that makes up the physical environment of the world of the play.

**Stagecraft** The knowledge and skills required to create the physical aspects of a production; i.e., scenery, lighting, costumes, props and recorded sound and music.

**Stage Left** That part of the stage to the actor’s left when the actor faces the audience.

**Stage Manager** The person who supervises the physical production of a play and who is in charge of the stage during the performance.

**Stage Right** That part of the stage to the actor’s right when the actor faces the audience.

**Strike** Dismantling the set, costumes and props at the end of the run of a show.

**Theme** The central thought, idea or significance of the action of a play.

**Upstage** The area of the stage farthest way from the audience and nearest to the back wall.
Part V: Resources

More Books by Arnold Lobel

Adventure Stories That Will Thrill You
The Bears of the Air
The Book of Pigerrick's Pig Limericks
Drinking Gourd
Fables
Giant John
Grasshopper on the Road
Great Blueness and Other Predicaments
Gregory Griggs and Other Nursery Rhyme People
Holiday for Mister Muster
How the Rooster Saved the Day
The Just Right Mother Goose
Lucille
The Magic Spectacles, and Other Easy-to-Read Stories
The Man Who Took the Indoors Out

The Mean Old Mean Hyena
Mouse Soup
Mouse Tales
On Market Street
On the Day Peter Stuyvesant Sailed into Town
Owl at Home
Prince Bertram the Bad
The Random House Book of Mother Goose
The Rose in My Garden
Sam the Minuteman
Small Pig
Uncle Elephant
A Treeful of Pigs
Wing Mo Moves the Mountain
Wiskers and Rhymes

Web Links

Study Aids
- Children's Theatre Company Student/Teacher Guide
- Children's Theatre of Charlotte Teacher Resource Guide
- Discussion Guide for Frog and Toad Are Friends
- First State Children's Theatre Company Activity Guide
- Frog and Toad Unit
- Guided Reading with Frog and Toad
- Muhlenberg Summer Musical Theatre Study Guide
- Teacher SCORE Cyber Guide to Frog and Toad Are Friends
- Web English Teacher

Arnold Lobel
- A Children's Author Who Got It Right
- Author Study
- Bibliography
- Bibliography and Notes
- Gone But Not Forgotten
- Harper-Collins Children's Books – Authors and Illustrators
- Houghton-Mifflin Reading – Meet the Author
- Story of Arnold Lobel

Frogs and Toads
- Amphibian and Reptile Crafts for Kids
- Amphibian and Reptile Elementary Lesson Plans
- AmphibiaWeb
- California Frog and Toad Calls
- Frogs and Toads
- Frogs and Toads K-3 Lesson Plans
- Frogs and Toads Links
- Frog Lesson Plans and Thematic Units
- Sing to me, baby . . . Ribbit!
- Story Hour Ideas for Frogs
- Welcome to Frogland!
- What is the Difference Between a Frog and a Toad?