

## Amazing Amphibians

Amphibians are a group of animals that include frogs, toads and salamanders. The word amphibian means two-lives. Amphibians spend their lives in the water and on land. Amphibians begin their life in water with gills and tails. As they grow, they develop lungs and legs for their life on land. Amphibians are cold-blooded, which means that their bodies are the same temperature as the air or water around them. Because of that fact, amphibians hibernate during the winter until the ground/water warms up again.

Some of our common amphibians are:

**American Toad:** Their skin is dry and warty, which gives them a differ-

ent look from frogs. This toad lives in woods, fields, backyards and around houses. Their call is a high-pitched musical trill.



**Spring Peeper Frog:** This is the smallest of our resident frogs. It is about the size of a nickel. Their skin is smooth with a darker "X" on it's back. It lives in wet areas like swamps and wet woods. It is a small but mighty caller. Their call is a loud Peep, Peep, Peep.



**Green Frog:** Their skin is

wet with tiny bumps and black spots. Their face looks like they have a green mustache. They can be found around water, in ponds, swamps and streams. The call is a single, one syllable "gungk".



**American Bullfrog:** This is the largest of our resident frogs. They are



about the width of a cereal bowl. Their back and sides can be green or brown with larger bumps. It is possible to find them in any permanent body of water. Their call is a loud,

guttural "jug-o-rum" sound.

**Gray Treefrog:** Their skin has lots of tiny bumps. They can be either gray or green colored on the back. They have sticky



toes to be able to stick onto trees. They can be found in wet woods or woods with water close by. Their call is a loud trill.

**Red-backed Salamander:**

This salamander is 3-4 inches long and can be found on rocky wooded hillsides.



## Stories and Guides for Amphibian Exploration

Here are some books to help bring the world of Amphibians alive in the classroom.

*The Salamander Room* by Anne Mazer

*Big Night for Salamanders* by Sarah Marwil Lamstein

*National Geographic Readers: Frogs!* by Elizabeth Carney

*Frogs* by Gail Gibbons

*DK Readers L1: Tale of a Tadpole* by Karen Wallace

*From Tadpole to Frog (Let's Read-and-Find-Out Sci-*

*ence 1)* by Wendy Pfeffer

*Scholastic Reader Level 2: Frogs* by Nic Bishop

*Red-eyed Tree Frog* (Scholastic Bookshelf) by Joy Cowley, Nic Bishop

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## Amazing Amphibians continued...

They are usually found under rocks, logs or under leaves in the woods. It can be red on the back or dark gray.

Spotted Salamander: This salamander has yellow spots on its dark gray back. It can be up to 8" long. It can be found in forests under logs.



Red-spotted Newt: This salamander truly does lead two lives. They start out in the water and as "teenagers" (Red- Eft stage) they leave the water to live in the woods for a few years and then return to the water to live as adults. They can be found in ponds and lakes or close by forests if in the Eft stage.



Amphibians need to lay their eggs in or near water. In the springtime, puddles form in the woods from the snow melt and rain. These are called Vernal Pools (spring pools). Many amphibians can only breed in these pools, so they are very important to amphibian survival. Amphibians are good indicators of habitat quality and can help us tell when there is a problem in the environment. They can only live in or near clean water. They are truly amazing animals. Have fun looking for them!



## Activities for Further Learning and Fun

**Mary Had a Little Frog** (to the tune of "Mary had a Little Lamb")

Mary had a little frog,  
Little, frog, little frog,  
Mary had a little frog,  
It's skin was green as grass.  
And everywhere that Mary went,  
Mary went, Mary went,  
Everywhere that Mary went,  
The frog would jump and splash.

### Fishing for Frogs Game

Tie 3 feet of string to a wooden spoon. Attach a magnet to the end of the string. Cut and laminate many different colored and sized frogs from construction paper or card stock. Attach a paper clip to each frog. Spread the frog shapes on the floor and let the children try to catch the frogs. Once they get the hang of it, have them work to catch a specific frog (the red frog or the biggest frog).

### Lily Pad Jump

Cut lily pad shapes out of green shelf liner (so the children don't slip when they land on it). Set out the lily pads on the floor. Have the children hop from one lily pad to another calling like different frogs.

## Amphibian Snack Ideas

### Frog apples

These are apples, with cream cheese balls with an added mini-chocolate chip for eyes and a piece of fruit roll up for a tongue.



### Another Frog Apple with grapes

Just cut your apple up into quarters and remove the core. Cut three grapes in half and slice two triangle toes in 4 of the halves. You can use a little cream cheese to stick the arms to the frog and then add his hands and feet. For the eyes, take a couple of small marshmallows {or you could do a blob of cream cheese} and add a chocolate chip to the middle. I stuck my marshmallows on with a little bit of cream cheese too.



### Oreo Pretzel Frog

Use an oreo cookie as the body of the frog, use pretzel twists as the legs and skittles or green M&M's as the eyes. Can use cookie icing to "glue" it all together. ENJOY!!!

