

Week 14 at a Glance

Book for the Week: *Frog and Toad Are Friends*

In Dover's *Aesop's Fables*: "Two Travelers and a Bear," p. 90

Optional Materials:

More books by Arnold Lobel

Button, needle, and thread

Materials to write a letter

Alphabet Page: Reptiles and amphibians

Grammar and Mechanics: How characters in a story are alike and how they are different

Composition: A friend



Monday

Literature

Frog and Toad Are Friends marks a slight step up in this series. Although the reading level and subject matter are still simple, this book is longer than the previous ones and is the first chapter book. If you wish, you can break the reading up over the week (reading two stories today and three on Wednesday, or one each day including Friday, or however you think would be best for your child). Or you can read this book just as you have the previous ones. The questions are marked as to which story they go with, making it easier to read the stories as you choose.

Read the book with your child, ask the following questions, and record the responses in the space to the right:

"Spring"

Why does Frog drag Toad out of bed and push him outside? (He wants him to get up and see how beautiful it is outside. And he wants to be with him.)	
When did Toad go to sleep? (November)	
What month is it when Frog wakes Toad? (April)	
What month does Toad want to sleep until? (May)	
What month is it when Toad finally gets up? (April)	

"The Story"

Why does Frog ask Toad to tell him a story? (Frog is not feeling well.)	
Name at least two things Toad does to help him think of a story. (He thinks, he walks on the front porch, he stands on his head, he pours glasses of water over his head, and he bangs his head against the wall.)	

"A Lost Button"

Name at least one place Toad and Frog go on their walk. (a large meadow, the woods, the river)	
Name what is wrong with at least two of the buttons they find while looking for Toad's button. (One is black instead of white, one has two holes instead of four, one is too small, one is square instead of round, and one is thin instead of thick.)	
Where does Toad find his button? (on the floor of his home)	

"A Swim"

Name at least three of the animals who stay to see Toad in his bathing suit. (turtle, lizards, snake, dragonflies, field mouse, frog)	
Why do the animals stay to see Toad? (They hear that he looks funny, and they like to see funny things.)	
Why does Toad eventually get out of the water, even though he doesn't want anyone to see him? (He gets too cold.)	

"The Letter"

Why is Toad sad when the mail comes? (He never gets any mail.)	
Why does Frog write a letter to Toad? (because Toad is his best friend and he wants to cheer him up)	
Why does it take the snail so long to deliver the letter? (Snails move very slowly.)	

Grammar and Mechanics

This week is more of a literary lesson, discussing character. You have already been doing this informally and orally with your discussions about the books each week. This is just the beginning of a more formal look at character.

Even if your child is writing, it is fine to do this page in the workbook orally.

Answers to Workbook Page

Two ways that Frog and Toad are the same:

Possible answers: They like to go on walks, they both take care of each other when they're sick, they like each other, they help each other, they do thoughtful things for each other, they like to swim. (Any answer that can be supported by the book is fine. It's even fine if your child says something like, "They're both amphibians.")

Two ways that Frog and Toad are different:

Possible answers: Frog likes to get up early in the year but Toad likes to sleep in, Frog can think of a story but Toad can't, Frog is more intelligent than Toad, Frog is more easy-going than Toad, Frog is trickier than Toad.

Introduce the idea more gently by asking leading questions ("What is something they both like to do?")

Reinforce the concept by looking for more similarities and differences in the book.

Provide more challenge by comparing and contrasting characters in other books (this is tomorrow's assignment).

Composition

This week your child will write about a friend of theirs. The form of this composition is up to you and your child. For example, it could be a description of the friend or a story about something they did together. Today, decide what the topic and title of the paper will be.

Tuesday

Literature

When discussing the book with your child, use these guidelines to help you:

Here are summaries for each of the five stories:

“Spring”: When spring arrives, Frog tricks Toad into getting out of bed earlier than he wants to.

“The Story”: Frog and Toad take care of each other when they’re not feeling well. To help Toad feel better, Frog tells Toad a story about Toad not being able to think of one to tell Frog.

“A Lost Button”: Toad loses a button from a jacket only to find it later in his house. Because Frog helped him search so long for the button, Toad sews all the buttons they found onto the jacket and gives it to Frog.

“A Swim”: Frog and Toad go swimming, but Toad is embarrassed by the way he looks in his bathing suit.

“The Letter”: Toad is sad because he never gets mail, so Frog cheers him up by writing him a letter.

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Frog and Toad are the main characters. They are best friends, they care for each other and help each other. They make each other happy and do a lot of things together. Frog seems to use his mind more—he seems more intelligent, trickier, and more easy going. Toad is more emotional.

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These stories are set in Toad’s house, Frog’s house, and the surrounding area (a pond, meadow, river, woods).

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Other characters in these stories are a sparrow, a raccoon, a turtle, some lizards, a snake, some dragonflies, a field mouse, and a snail. The sparrow, raccoon, and (especially) snail are helpful; the others are not.

Story

Characters

Setting

External Details

Toad reveals more internal details than Frog, as he is the more emotional character. He is frustrated when he can't think of a story, angry when he loses his button and can't find it, embarrassed by his bathing suit, and sad at not getting mail. Frog is frequently happy (when spring arrives, when Toad gives him his jacket, when he sees Toad in his bathing suit, and when he makes Toad happy with his letter). He is sad with Toad when Toad is sad about not getting any mail.

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“Spring”: Toad wants to sleep but Frog wants him to get up. The conflict is settled when Frog tricks Toad into getting out of bed.

“The Story”: There is no real conflict here. Toad has a problem (but not a true conflict) because he can't think of a story to tell Frog. This problem is solved when Frog feels better and tells a story to Toad instead.

“A Lost Button”: There is no real conflict here. Toad has a problem (but not a true conflict) because he can't find the button from his jacket. This problem is solved when he finds it in his house.

“A Swim”: Toad doesn't want anyone to see him in his swimsuit, but the other animals want to. This conflict is solved when Toad can't stay in the water any more, so the animals get to see him.

“The Letter”: There is no real conflict here. Toad has a problem (but not a true conflict) because he is sad that he doesn't get any mail. This problem is solved when Frog writes him a letter.

Internal Details

Conflict

Grammar and Mechanics

Today, students need to choose any other two characters from the reading so far and find two points of comparison and two points of contrast. I give an example in the Student Workbook, so refer to that. There are too many possibilities to give a full answer here. The points of comparison and contrast can be very simple (for example, Harold is a boy and Madeline is a girl), or they can be deeper. They can be based physical features, the characters' personalities, or something they do in the story. The important thing is to recognize what are aspects of the characters and to recognize when they are similar and when they are different.

If your child wants to use one or two characters from a book they have read outside the scope of this class, that is fine, as long as you are familiar with the characters and stories and can appropriately judge the answers. Even if your child is writing, this can be done orally.

Composition

Brainstorm at least three points to include in the paper about your child's friend. If it is a description, think of three things about the friend to describe (short, brown hair; loves animals; laughs really loud). If it's a story about something they did together, think of three parts of the story to tell, and remember that these can include external and internal details (went to a water park together, played in the wave pool, we got so tired). If it's an opinion paper on why your child likes this friend, think of three reasons. You don't need to make complete sentences today, but decide on the points and their order in the paper.

Reading Journal

Turn to the appropriate pages in the Student Workbook. Have your child write or dictate one sentence summarizing the story, then a second sentence expressing their response to the book. Finally, have your child choose one sentence from the book to copy, at least in part, for handwriting practice.

Wednesday

Literature

Read *Frog and Toad Are Friends* with your child, ask the following questions, and record the responses in the space to the right:

"Spring"

How does Frog feel about spring? (Excited, happy—anything like this)	
How does Toad feel when Frog first wakes him up? (Tired—he wants to sleep more.)	
Are you more like Frog or like Toad when you wake up?	
Why does Frog trick Toad into thinking it is May? (He tricks him because he wants to be with his friend.)	
Do you think Frog did the right thing in tricking Toad? Why?	
Imagine Toad and Frog had a good time that day. They come back to Toad's house and Frog tells Toad that he tricked him and it is really April. How do you think Toad will feel? What will he say? Can you think of two different things he might feel and say?	

"The Story"

When you're sick, what do you like people to do for you?	
Why does Toad feel terrible after trying to think of a story for Frog? (Because he's been doing things like pouring water on himself and banging his head against the wall.)	
How does Frog's story help Toad? (It helps put Toad to sleep.)	

"A Lost Button"

How do you feel when you can't find something?	
How do you feel when you think you've lost something then you find it?	
Why does Toad sew all the buttons on his jacket then give the jacket to Frog? (Toad feels bad he caused Frog so much trouble looking for his button, when it was on the floor of his house all the time.)	
Would you like a jacket like the kind Toad gave to Frog (with buttons all over it)?	

"A Swim"

Has there been a time when you were embarrassed about how you looked, like Toad is about how he looks in a bathing suit? Was there anything that helped you feel less embarrassed? Do you think other people have times like that?	
Do you find a toad in a bathing suit funny?	
*How does Toad feel at the end of the story?	

*Answers will vary—some children will answer more based on how they would feel, some more on what has happened previously in the story, and some based on the last picture of Toad walking away. Regardless of your child's answer, the important thing is to ask them why Toad feels that way and discuss possible other feelings he might have. For example, most people feel embarrassed when others laugh at them, and Toad's previous actions also lead to this conclusion. But in the picture of him and his last words ("Of course I do") he seems fine with the idea that he looks funny in his bathing suit. Some people are comfortable with others laughing at them, or even enjoy it. This is a chance to reinforce the idea of different people (and characters in books) having different reactions to the same situations.

"The Letter"

How do you feel when you get mail?	
Why do you think Toad is so happy to get mail from Frog? (Possible answers: It shows him Frog is thinking of him, he likes opening and reading mail, he'll be able to keep the letter and read it whenever he wants.)	
What was your favorite story in this book? Why?	
The title of this book is <i>Frog and Toad are Friends</i> . Usually friends are very good to each other, but sometimes they make mistakes or are thoughtless with each other. In which of these stories do you think Frog and Toad treat each other the best—the most like friends should? Why?	

Grammar and Mechanics

Have your child choose five to ten words to put in their dictionary pages. They can be words from their reading, from daily life, etc. For extra challenge, aim for ten words and require that one or more be from their reading, preferably words they weren't familiar with before the book.

Turn to the Alphabet Page. This week you will do an alphabet of reptiles and amphibians. This was a particularly challenging alphabet, and—as with all alphabets—if it will be more chore than pleasure to your child, you can skip it. If you wish to be complete, you can find something for each letter, but I skipped those that could only be answered with something very obscure. I found nothing good for *E, J, U, X, Y, or Z*. But, I included both very general terms (*snake*) and specific species (*boa constrictor*). Also, for the most part I avoided dinosaur names, though they were reptiles, and you should feel free to use them. You can fill in the missing letters with dinosaurs.

Work with your child to come up with your own first, without any help. Once you've filled in what letters you can, feel free to go online (together), etc. Some will be unfamiliar to your child, but one purpose of these exercises is to expand vocabulary. Here is a list if you get stuck on any letters:

Alligator	J _____	Red-eyed tree frog
Boa constrictor	Komodo dragon	Snake
Crocodile	Lizard	Turtle
Dinosaur	Monitor lizard	U _____
E _____	Newt	Velociraptor
Frog	Oviraptor	Water moccasin
Gecko	Python	X _____
Horned frog	Quetzalcoatlus	Y _____
Iguana		Z _____

Composition

Your child will write the rough draft of their paper. Do not do this in the composition book but instead on scratch paper or on a computer. Focus on the content. Review the three (or more) points your child listed yesterday, and discuss what the sentences will sound like. Be sure your child says them aloud and you are both happy with them before writing any down (but don't do too much correction—you want these to be your child's sentences, not yours). Strive for clarity, and worry less about perfect sentence structure or word choice. Those will come later. If your child is writing the sentences, rather than dictating them to you, don't worry about correcting any spelling mistakes they make.

Thursday

Literature

Read the Aesop's fable, "Two Travelers and a Bear," p. 90. As usual, either you or your child can read it, or you can share the reading (each taking part of the story). Discuss the moral with your child, ideally coming up with a way they can apply it to their own life.

Grammar and Mechanics

Today your child writes a one-sentence summary of another possible story involving Frog and Toad. The two things to note are whether something happens in the story (it doesn't need to be much, but you need some sort of action or interaction between the two characters) and that the characters don't act against the way they are portrayed in these stories. This exercise can be done orally.

Composition

Today your child completes their final draft. (If there is still a lot to do and it would be too stressful to complete the composition today, they can use tomorrow for this as well.)

Review the rough draft together:

1. Is the description, anecdote, or other content clearly expressed?
2. Are capital letters and end punctuation studied so far correct?

The final draft of the paper should be in the composition book.

Friday

Today is a free day to use however you choose. Finish any unfinished work from the week, review, reread the book and/or fable, explore some of the ideas below, or simply take a day off language arts.

Extending the Lesson

Read more books by Arnold Lobel. (There are many, including three other Frog and Toad books and *Mouse Soup*, which is read later this year in this class.)

Write a story based on Thursday's grammar assignment.

Learn to sew on a button.

Go swimming.

Write a letter to a friend.