

# Table of Contents

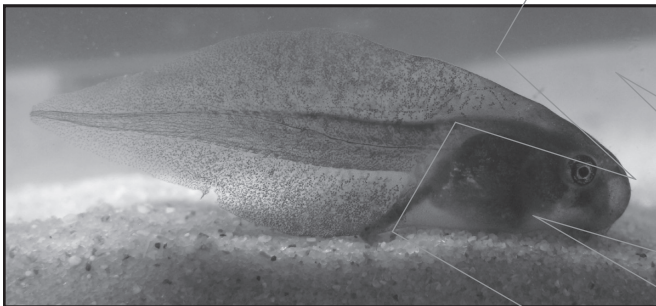


Lesson	Title	New York Standards	Page Number
Teaching Lesson	How Earthquakes Happen	2.1e	<b>4</b>
<b>Social Studies Lessons</b>			
Lesson 1	The Erie Canal	3.1.e	<b>10</b>
Lesson 2	Benjamin Franklin, a Great American	1.3c	<b>14</b>
Lesson 3	The Declaration of Independence	1.1b, 1.3c	<b>18</b>
Lesson 4	Children at Work	1.1a; 1.3a; 4.1c, e	<b>22</b>
Lesson 5	How Cars Changed the World	1.3a; 4.1c, e	<b>26</b>
Lesson 6	Old New York	1.1a, 1.3a	<b>30</b>
Lesson 7	How Governments Work Together	5.1c, 5.2e	<b>34</b>
Lesson 8	Our National Park System	1.3a, 5.1d	<b>38</b>
Lesson 9	The United Nations	5.1b, e	<b>42</b>
Lesson 10	New York City—The Big Apple	1.4b	<b>46</b>
Lesson 11	New York Explorers	1.1a, 2.1a, 2.3a	<b>50</b>
Lesson 12	The Iroquois Nation	1.1a, 1.3a, 5.1d	<b>54</b>
<b>Science Lessons</b>			
Lesson 13	Fun with Magnets	PS5.1e; 5.2a, b	<b>58</b>
Lesson 14	Blowing in the Wind	PS2.1a	<b>62</b>
Lesson 15	It's All Wrapped Up	PS4.1e, g	<b>66</b>
Lesson 16	The Salty Seas	PS2.1c	<b>70</b>
Lesson 17	The Special Skin of Frogs	LE3.1a; 4.1a, e	<b>74</b>
Lesson 18	A Light in the Sky	PS2.1e	<b>78</b>
Lesson 19	The Science of Forecasting	IS KI 1, 2, 3	<b>82</b>
Lesson 20	Circuits—Circles of Power	PS4.1e, 4.2b	<b>86</b>
Lesson 21	The Changing Earth	PS2.1d	<b>90</b>
Lesson 22	Hurricane!	PS2.1e	<b>94</b>
Lesson 23	Desert Survivors	LE3.1b, c	<b>98</b>
Lesson 24	Volcanoes in Action	PS2.1e	<b>102</b>
<b>Glossary</b>			<b>106</b>
<b>Performance Projects</b>			<b>107</b>

# The Special Skin of Frogs

You can find frogs living almost everywhere in the world. The only continent without frogs is Antarctica. Frogs spend part of their life underwater, like a fish. Then they spend the other part on land. Animals that do this are called amphibians. Like other amphibians, frogs can **breathe** both on land and underwater. How do they do this?

All animals have body parts that help them live. Some body parts help animals breathe. Fish have gills. Gills pull oxygen out of water. People have lungs. Lungs take oxygen out of air. A frog breathes both in the water and on dry land. Does it have both gills and lungs?



A baby frog, or tadpole, looks and acts like a fish. It has gills and never comes out of the water. As it gets older, its body changes. The gills disappear, and the tadpole grows arms, legs, and lungs. Then it hops up on land. It still has its tail, but this slowly disappears as the

frog gets bigger. Once the tail is gone, the frog is an adult.



A grown frog can still live underwater, even without gills. Some frogs spend the whole winter at the bottom of a pond. They can do this because their skin is very special. It acts like a huge gill. It absorbs oxygen from the water in the mud at the bottom of a pond. So, frogs can breathe through their skin, but that's not all their skin helps them do. When we need water, we drink it. But frogs do not swallow water. Instead, they soak up wetness through their skin!

But even with their amazing skin, the number of frogs is growing smaller and smaller each year. Scientists are not sure what is causing this. A lot of research is being done to try to find out why.

# The Special Skin of Frogs

Frogs live everywhere in the world except on the frozen continent of Antarctica. A frog spends part of its life underwater, like a fish, and the other part on land. Animals that do this are called amphibians. Like other amphibians, the frog must be able to **breathe** both on land and underwater. How does it do this?

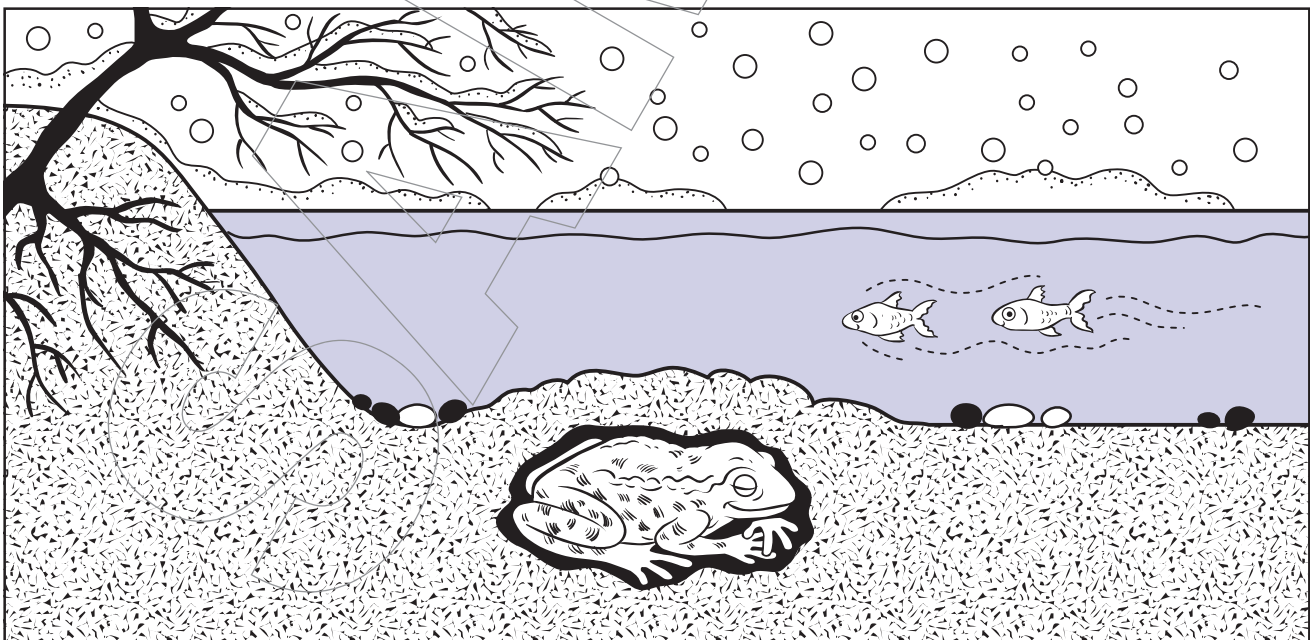
Fish breathe through special body parts called gills. Gills are specially made to get oxygen from water. Land animals—including people—have lungs instead of gills. Lungs are built to get oxygen from air. Since a frog breathes both in the water and on dry land, you may think it has both gills and lungs.

This is not true. A baby frog, or tadpole, looks and acts just like a fish. A tadpole has gills and never comes out of the water. As it gets older, its body changes completely. The gills disappear, and the tadpole develops arms, legs, and lungs. Then it hops up on land. It has arms

and legs, but it also has its fishlike tail. The tail slowly disappears as the frog gets bigger. Once the tail is gone, the frog is an adult.

A grown frog can still live underwater, though. In fact, some frogs pass the whole winter at the bottom of a pond. This is because of another very special body part—the skin. A frog’s skin acts as a huge gill, drawing needed oxygen from the pond’s water. It also allows the frog to take in water. A frog does not swallow water as we do. Instead, it soaks up wetness through its skin. That is why a frog can live in the mud at the bottom of a pond. It takes in oxygen and water through its amazing skin.

Scientists have begun to worry about frogs. All around the world, the number of frogs is growing smaller and smaller each year. Scientists are not sure why this is happening. But a lot of research is being done to try to find out why.



Read each question. Circle the letter of the best answer.

1 Amphibians can breathe \_\_\_\_.

A on dry land

B on Antarctica

C on land and in water

D under the sea

2 The main idea of the fourth paragraph is that underwater, a grown frog \_\_\_\_.

A sleeps all winter

B is happiest

C uses its lungs to get air

D breathes through its skin

3 You can decide from the article that a goldfish probably breathes \_\_\_\_.

A on land and in water

B through gills

C through lungs

D faster than a tadpole does

4 What happens *first*?

A A tadpole looks and acts like a fish.

B A tadpole develops lungs and legs.

C A frog hops up on land.

D A tadpole's gills disappear.

5 Which of these sentences is an opinion?

A The frog takes in oxygen and water through its skin.

B A frog's skin is not pleasant to look at.

C Frogs are amphibians.

D Lungs are built to get oxygen from the air.

6 A tadpole is able to breathe underwater because \_\_\_\_.

A it has lungs like a reptile

B it has gills like a fish

C it has a body shaped like a fish

D it has special skin

7 In this article, the word **breathe** means to take in \_\_\_\_.

A water

B food

C oxygen

D light



Write your answer to each question on the lines.

8 What might happen to frogs if the climate became warmer? Give reasons for your thinking.

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9 How does a frog's body change from a tadpole to an adult? Explain all the stages. Draw pictures to show how the frog changes if you wish.

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