

Frogs and Toads

Frogs and toads are both amphibians. Amphibians are animals that spend part of their lives in the water and part on land. Most frogs and toads are born in the water and spend the first part of their lives there. As adults, they spend most of their time on land, but return to the water to mate and lay eggs. The eggs hatch into tadpoles, baby frogs that resemble fish. Tadpoles are herbivores. They eat plants in the water. When tadpoles grow into adult frogs or toads, they become carnivores, eating mostly insects as well as spiders, worms, small fish and other tiny animals. Some, like tree frogs, never enter the water, while others spend most of their lives in or near it. Both frogs and toads are cold-blooded animals. They usually avoid direct sunlight and are more active at night or on cloudy, rainy days.

Frogs and toads are very closely related, and it is sometimes difficult to tell them apart. Frog species number about 3,500 while there are only about 300 types of toads. These animals are found in almost every part of the world. One of the main differences between the two is that frogs spend more time in the water than toads. Also, frogs have smooth, moist skin while toads have rough, warty skin, though it is possible to find a slimy toad or a frog with warts. Both have long hind legs, webbed feet and eyes that bulge out of their heads. Their eyes give them excellent eyesight and the ability to see in every direction. They also both have long, sticky tongues for catching insects. Frogs have teeth, but they swallow their prey whole. They use their teeth only to hold onto their prey, not to chew it. Toads do not have any teeth. Frogs and toads absorb water through their skin, so they do not need to drink. They both have eyes on the tops of their heads. This makes it easy for them to look around for insects and other prey while they are sitting in the water. The *gribbet* or croaking sound that frogs and toads make is produced when the animal puffs out its necks. Only males make this sound, which is a mating call.

The biggest frogs, called Goliath Frogs, are almost a foot long, while the smallest frogs measure less than half an inch in length. These tiny frogs, called Gold Frogs, are found in Brazil. The biggest toads, called Cane Toads, are about 6 to 9 inches long. The smallest are Oak Toads, which are only about an inch and a half long. Since frogs usually spend more time in the water than toads, they have stronger legs that are more suited for swimming and leaping. Toads, on the other hand, tend to have short, stubby hind legs that are better for walking.

Frogs and Toads Questions

1. Which statement is true?
 - a. Frogs and toads are reptiles.
 - b. Frogs are amphibians and toads are reptiles.
 - c. Frogs and toads are amphibians.
 - d. There is really no way to tell the difference between frogs and toads.

2. What are newborn frogs and toads called?

3. Which statement is true?
 - a. Tadpoles eat plants; frogs and toads eat meat.
 - b. Tadpoles are carnivores; frogs and toads are herbivores.
 - c. Both tadpoles and adult frogs are carnivores.
 - d. Both tadpoles and adult toads eat plants.

4. You are more likely to see a frog
 - a. in the desert.
 - b. on a rainy day.
 - c. in the sun.
 - d. after sunrise.

5. In contrast to toads, frogs have
 - a. slimy skin.
 - b. bumpy skin.
 - c. dry skin.
 - d. cold skin.

6. Which has webbed feet?
 - a. only frogs
 - b. only toads
 - c. both
 - d. neither

Frogs and Toads Questions (Cont'd)

7. Frogs and toads have
 - a. forked tongues.
 - b. long, sticky tongues.
 - c. both
 - d. neither

8. Male frogs and toads make a croaking sound by
 - a. puffing up their lips.
 - b. rubbing their legs together.
 - c. puffing out their necks.
 - d. Jumping.

9. Which statement is true?
 - a. Frogs spend more time in or near water than toads.
 - b. Toads spend more time in or near water than frogs.
 - c. Adult frogs and toads no longer go near the water.
 - d. Adult frogs and toads spend most of their time in the water.

10. Which statement is true?
 - a. Frogs have long legs for leaping.
 - b. Toads have short, stubby legs for walking.
 - c. Frogs have long legs for swimming.
 - d. All of these statements are true.

Name _____



Date _____

Frogs and Toads Answers

1. c
2. Tadpoles
3. a
4. b
5. a
6. c
7. b
8. c
9. a
10. d