

“Frog Call Game” lesson plan

Uses elements from an activity by Junction Creek Stewardship Council

Duration: 20-40 minutes

Objectives:

- Students will identify different Ottawa frog species by appearance and call
- Students will understand and illustrate how it can be difficult for frogs of the same species to find each other in the wild

Background:

Imagine that it’s a beautiful evening in the spring...You are well-rested after a full day of basking (sitting) in the sun and now that it’s the evening, you want to burn off some of your energy and see who else is living in your pond. You could call for a mate, call to tell others they are coming too close to your home (territory), or even just call to see who will respond. Each student is going to find their inner frog today and experience what it sounds like to live in a busy pond.

Materials:

- Frog call USB
- Large photos of frogs
- 30 x “Frog identification guides – adapted from Toronto Zoo” handout
- Balloons and balloon pump
- Elastic bands and small containers
- Tape (if elastic bands come off the container)

Frog Species	Instructions for students/props to give
Card #1. Leopard Frog / Grenouille Leopard (track 11 & 31)	Blown up balloon (students rub their hands on the balloon)
Card #2. Green Frog / Grenouille Verte (track 14 & 34)	Elastic band on container (students pluck elastic bands)
Card #3. Bullfrog / Ouaouaron (track 15 & 35)	Students say “Jug-O-Rum”

Procedure:

1. Prepare frog call USB and speaker ahead of time.
2. Ask students if they have ever seen a frog in the wild – where did they see them? If no one has seen one in the wild, ask where students have seen frogs online or on television. Ask them what sound they have heard them make (English or another language doesn't count!).
3. Play track 35. Ask the students what it sounds like. Next play track 34, then track 31. Ask if these calls all sound like they are from the same animal.
4. Give each student a "Frog identification guide" handout. As you replay each sound (this time play tracks 11, 14, and 15 that includes an introduction to each frog call), have students find the correct frog on their handout. Explain that these three frog species are all found in the Ottawa area, and that today they will have the chance to become these frogs!

5. Tell students this story:

Your task, should you choose to accept it, is to be a frog! Imagine that it's a beautiful evening in the spring. You are well-rested after a full day of basking (sitting) in the sun and now that's it's the evening, you want to burn off some of your energy and see who else is living in the pond. You could call for a mate, call to identify your home (territory), or even just call to see who will respond. Each of you is going to find your inner frog today and experience what it sounds like to live in a busy pond.

Before we get started, there are a few things that we need to know:

- We need to know the sounds of each frog so listen carefully as I play them for you.
 - Walk through the group and randomly assign each student a species and give them the corresponding prop (if applicable). Ensure there is enough variation, and note that it helps to have more Green Frogs and fewer Leopard Frogs and Bullfrogs due to the nature of the louder balloons and voices.
 - Go through the sounds again but have the group make the call sounds using their voices or prop.
 - You will be holding up photos of the frogs (names on back for your reference). To practice, hold up one frog's photo and encourage the students with that prop to make "call" to each other. When you stop holding up the photo, students stop calling. The students are to call for the entire time that their frog's photo is up, and stay quiet when their species is not held up. As students get better at remembering their frog, teachers can hold up more than one picture at a time. This is like springtime when frogs are calling to each other at the same time.
 - You may have to remind students of their call sound and tell them when to begin calling. You may also have to remind them when to stop. Have students switch props for round 2.
6. Gather all props back from students. How might it be difficult for frogs of the same species (i.e., two different leopard frogs) to find each other in the same pond? Why is having a different call important? What would happen if all of the frogs sounded the same? If two types of frogs had the same call, they might end up attracting the wrong animal to them! Think of how two people may have the same name and if we say their name, a different person may come to see us than we wanted. It's important for frogs, and other animals, to have a unique call for their species so there is no confusion who they are trying to "talk" to.