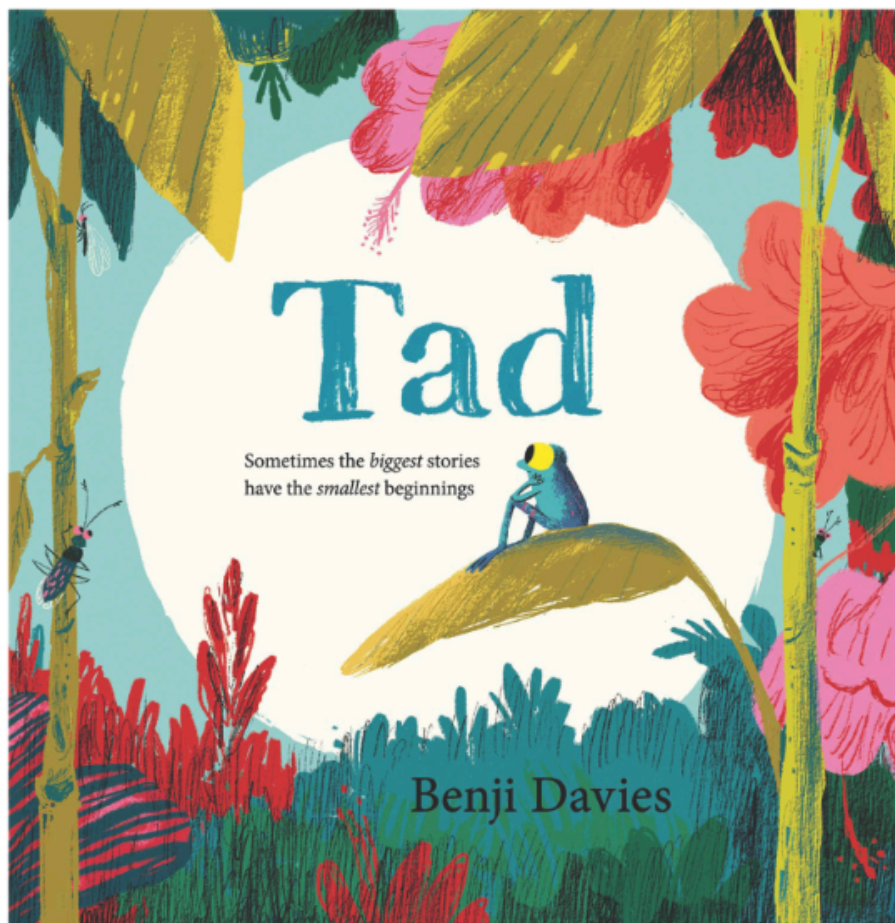


'TAD' BY BENJI DAVIES ACTIVITY PACK

For students aged 5+

PERFECT FOR: An exciting story, full of atmosphere and tension. The story is ideal for learning about tadpoles and frogs, as well as exploring themes of change, facing our fears, growing up, being different to others and being brave.

ACTIVITIES INCLUDE: Exploring and comparing life cycles; letter writing; performing poetry; practical maths activities and nature art.



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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

For students aged 5+

1. Spend some time looking at the **front cover**. What can you see? Do you notice anything interesting? Where do you think the story is set? What animal can you see? Now, read the blurb. Do you notice anything else interesting? What do you predict will happen in this story? You could also spend some time exploring the end pages – what are the white, circular blobs on the pages?
2. Discuss the title of the book. **Does the word 'Tad' mean anything to you?** Does it sound like any other words you know? Who or what might 'Tad' be?
3. As a group, **create a spider diagram of words, pictures, ideas and themes linked to 'frog'**. You could think about its appearance, diet, habitat and how it moves.
4. As a class, **read and enjoy the story**. Now talk about what you liked about it and what you didn't like about it. Do you have a favourite illustration? Why is it your favourite? Is there anything you found puzzling or confusing? Does the story remind you of any other stories, films, songs or poems you know? Why?
5. Look at the first double page spread. **Who is Tad?** Why is she 'almost a frog'? Can you describe Tad's habitat – does it look friendly and welcoming?
6. **Why do you think Benji Davies has repeated the word 'small' and 'smaller' on the next double page spread?** What effect might it have? Who or what do you predict Big Blub might be? Perhaps you could draw a picture! Do you notice anything interesting about Tad's eye colour? Why might this be?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

For students aged 5+

7. Look at pages 5 and 6. Why do you think '**great, big, nasty fish**' is set out like this? What do you notice about the colour of the pages now? Why might this be? Which words and phrases tell us that Big Blub is ancient? What is the name of the punctuation mark at the end of the page? How should this be read?
8. Look at the double page spread which starts 'Day by day...' **How are the tadpoles changing?** What happens first? What happens to them last? What might Tad be thinking and feeling? How do you know? What advice would you give to Tad?
9. Tad notices '**fewer and fewer tadpoles to curl up with**'. Why might this be? What do you think is happening to them? What does Tad think has happened to them?
10. **Do you agree that Tad is 'strong and clever'?** What evidence is there to support this statement? Which of these other words also describe Tad? Perhaps you could order them from least to most? Brave, unkind, curious, lonely, cowardly.
11. Spend some time exploring the **use of colour** throughout the book. How do the colours change when Big Blub is mentioned? Why might this be? What do you notice about the colours when Tad finally jumps to the surface of the pond?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

For students aged 5+

12. Spend some time reading and exploring '**The Grotlyn**', which is also written by Benji Davies. How is this story similar to 'Tad'? How is it different? Think carefully about how Benji Davies creates tension and mystery. Use a Venn Diagram to compare the two stories.

13. **What do you think Tad has learned by the end of the story?** How has she changed and developed over the course of the story? Choose one word to describe her at the beginning of the book and one word to describe her at the end of the book. Explain your word choices to a partner.

14. **Would you recommend this story to anyone?** Do you know someone who might enjoy it? Why?

15. **What else can you find out about Benji Davies?** You might like to read some more of his books like 'On Sudden Hill', 'The Storm Whale in Winter' and 'Grandad's Island'. Can you notice any similar themes, characters or storylines?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY 1

For students aged 5+

BEFORE READING: LIFE CYCLES

Before reading, you could spend some time **pond-dipping** with your students if you have one available to you. Ask your students if they have ever seen frogspawn or tadpoles before? Where? When?

What do your students already know about the **life cycle of different animals**? Can they describe the life cycle of a butterfly, frog, chicken, human and plant? (You might want to link this to the work on the water cycle in Authorfy's other Benji Davies' scheme of work for 'The Snowflake'!)

Give your students some pictures of various **life cycles** for them to order and label, introducing key words, such as 'frogspawn', 'froglet', 'habitat', 'pond' and so on.

You could also take some of the illustrations from 'Tad' and ask them to **order and sequence** them, referring to Tad's transformation.

For students who may require a challenge, you could encourage them to **compare and contrast two life cycles of two different animals**. Use a Venn Diagram to explore how they are similar and different.

You could also introduce the idea of a simple food chain to children, discussing how arrows show a **transfer of energy and what is eaten or consumed**.

By placing two paper plates on top of each other and fastening them with a split pin in the centre of the plates, you can **create a simple moving diagram** to show the life cycle of a frog. All you need to do is cut a section out of the top plate to reveal the various stages of a frog's life cycle underneath.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY 2

For students aged 5+

BEFORE READING: NATURE POEMS

Spend some time as a class reading and enjoying a range of **nature-themed poems**.

You could explore these poems, which are all available online:

- Extinct by Mandy Coe
- The River by Valerie Bloom
- The Caterpillar and Hurt No Living Thing by Christina Rossetti
- Advice from a Caterpillar by Rachel Rooney
- Something Told the Wild Geese by Rachel Field
- Who Cares by James Carter

After listening to a range of poems, you could record your thoughts and feelings in a Book Talk grid (Aidan Chambers):

WHAT DO WE LIKE ABOUT THE POEM?	WHAT DO WE DISLIKE ABOUT THE POEM?
IS ANYTHING IN THE POEM CONFUSING?	DOES THE POEM REMIND US OF ANYTHING ELSE?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY 2 (CONTINUED)

For students aged 5+

BEFORE READING: NATURE POEMS

Now, in groups, **choose a poem to perform**. Think about who will say each part and if there are parts of the poem you could all say together.

Will you **whisper** parts?

Will some parts be read **loudly**?

What about **pace**: should some phrases be read quickly and some slowly?

You may also wish to add **actions**, **sound effects** and **musical instruments** to your poem to enhance your performance.

Finally, ask students to write their own poem about how the tadpole moves in the style of 'Inside a Shell' by John Foster. You could give your students the following sentence prompts, based on the poem, to help them structure their own: **Inside a pond... Inside a leaf... Inside the mud ...Inside a tadpole...**

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY 3

For students aged 5+

DURING READING: A LETTER OF ADVICE

Poor Tad! She is so small, much smaller than all her tadbrothers and tadsisters! She struggles to wiggle her tail and keep up with them!

Discuss with your students **how Tad might be feeling at the beginning of the story**. Is she feeling angry and frustrated? Left out? Can the children relate to her in any way? Has a similar thing ever happened to them?

What advice could your students give to Tad? Encourage them to think carefully about:

- What they could say to Tad about her size?
- What advice they could give her about how to hide from Big Blub?
- What comfort they can give her about not being small forever?

Next, challenge students to use **time conjunctions** in their writing (firstly, next, then, afterwards) to describe the process of changing and growing to Tad. This will link well with the previous work on labelling and drawing life cycles! For example:

Dear Tad,

I'm sorry to hear you are feeling sad about being smaller than everyone else. You are still very special and unique! I know it's hard to keep up with the other tadpoles, but maybe you could ask them to slow down? While you're swimming in the pond, be careful to stay away from Big Blub. He is mean, huge and nasty! Make sure you hide behind a large rock or in a dark leaf. But don't worry – you won't have to hide forever because things will soon change. Firstly, you will grow back legs, then front legs. Next you will grow webbed toes and your legs will get stronger. Finally, your tail will shrink and disappear. You'll be a frog! Keep swimming, keep being kind and keep being brave!

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY 4

For students aged 5+

DURING READING: FROGGY MATHS

There are many opportunities to develop mathematical cross-curricular links throughout the story.

The endpapers could be used to **develop children's knowledge of estimating**, for example, and children could be encouraged to estimate and then count how many tadpoles are on various double page spreads. For some children you may wish to introduce the **idea of measurement** too – how many cubes long is Big Blub? How wide is Big Blub?

Using illustrations from the book would also be an excellent way to introduce children to **multiplication and doubling**. You could create a range of **worded maths problems** such as:

- How many eyes does one frog have? How many eyes would three frogs have?
- How many legs does one frog have? How many legs would four frogs have?
- If there are 20 legs in total, how many frogs are there?

Later on in the story, there is an opportunity to **reinforce counting backwards** from 10 and also introduce the idea of '**fewer**' and '**less than**'. Green counters could be used to represent the frogs, with questions like, 'What is 2 less than 10?' being used to practically demonstrate the idea of **subtraction**. For younger children, joining in with nursery rhymes, such as 'Five Little Speckled Frogs' would also be an engaging activity.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY 5

For students aged 5+

DURING READING: WATERY ART

Spend some time looking at how different artists have **portrayed nature, water and animals**. You could explore:

- Landscape with Yellow Birds by Paul Klee
- The Water Lily Pond by Claude Monet
- Mink Pond by Winslow Homer
- Waterlillies at Dusk No 2 by Jennifer Lommers
- Pesci e Pescetti by Guido Borelli
- Frog by Romero Britto

Use a **Venn diagram** to compare and contrast two of the paintings, thinking about how they are similar and different. You could consider the use of colour, texture, and how both paintings make you feel.

It would be interesting to share the double page spread of Big Blub with your students again here and discuss how the artist might have created Big Blub's scales. Perhaps you could try some **print techniques** and **different materials** to create your own fish scales?

Finally, give your students time to **plan and sketch their own nature or pond scene**, based on the book and the paintings they have explored. They might wish to create something more abstract or a life-like scene with animals.

Using the shapes, patterns and techniques employed by Klee in '**Landscape with Yellow Birds**' would be a simple and effective way to create your own pond artwork. Give your students time to experiment with **brushstrokes** and **texture**, before they paint their artwork.