

Fable Series

Frogs and a Stranger

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<http://eltforward.com/index.html>

Sandwiched between two low-rise buildings was a creek. It was home to several families of happy, fun-loving frogs.

Cheeky Frog, Smiley Frog, and Biggy Frog were close friends and good hunting partners. What did they hunt? Mosquitoes, moths, snails and slugs. Plenty of them by the creek, but they had to be quick. Gulp! Pop! Yup!

Days after a storm were less fun. But for a woman with a hat and in gum boots from the nearby building, there was work to do. She would come down the creek, clearing away fallen tree branches, and on some occasions, even food wrappers, plastic bottles and other rubbish. In no time the water would be flowing smoothly again.

One day, while out food hunting, Cheeky Frog spotted a newcomer. He looked *different*; his skin was rough with warts. He sounded *different*, too. Tock, tock, tock, like a dripping tap...

Cheeky Frog went and told her friends about the stranger. “He doesn’t look like us, does he?” asked Smiley Frog. They didn’t know what to do, and decided to keep an eye on him.

One afternoon, when Cheeky Frog ran into the stranger again and heard him “tocking”, she couldn’t help but “tock” back. To her surprise, immediately came a reply: tock, TOCK.

Haha, that was fun, Cheeky Frog thought. Tock-TOCK-TOCK, tock-TOCK-tock-TOCK. A Tocky Frog he was! This “tock” continued for days, and she began to feel like “tocking” to an old friend.

The creek was usually quiet, except during school holidays when children would come and play. On a hot summer morning, two boys came with a jar, looking around.

Cheeky Frog and her friends were also out, enjoying their tasty meal of insects. All of a sudden, there came a series of TOCKS, loud and urgent and scary.

Scarcely did they have time to look when they saw – aargh - Biggy Frog trapped in a jar left on the bank by the boys, who were roaming by the far end of the creek.

Tocky hopped over, and they crawled gingerly towards the jar. “Hop! Biggy, hop! Quick!” croaked they. Biggy tried, but too frightened.

Tocky motioned to them and trilled in unison: Tock-tock-tock-Pause. Tock-tock-tock-Pause.

Biggy got the idea, gathered his strength, and jumped for dear life. Countless times he reached the rim of the jar only to fall back, frustrated.

They kept trilling, led by Tocky.

Biggy kept hopping...until blop! Out he came. Free from his prison. They ran, jumped, glided, and burrowed themselves into the soft hollow of the creek, breathless. Phew!

Tock, tock, tock, took on a fresh meaning. A dear friend the frogs had found.

Questions:

The following questions challenge your thinking skills of comprehension, analysis and evaluation.

1. Have you had friends like any of the Frogs in the story?
2. What is a friend to you?
3. The frogs “didn’t know what to do” to the stranger. Why? What made it difficult?
4. How do you respond to someone who is “different”?
5. In what way may the “stranger” be “different”?
