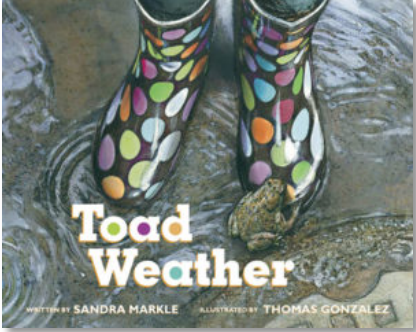


PEACHTREE
TEACHER'S GUIDE



Toad Weather

Written by Sandra Markle | Illustrated by Thomas Gonzalez

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Ages 4–8

Lexile • F&P • GRL M; Gr 2

ABOUT THE BOOK

There's nothing to do on a rainy day—or so Ally thinks. But Mama says she's seen something amazing, so despite Ally's misgivings, she sets out on an adventure with her mother and grandmother. On her journey, she sees all sorts of things: dripping awnings, wet cardboard, splashing cars...but also earthworms, storm drain geysers, and oil slick patterns. Then, they turn the corner, just in time to see a big crowd. What's happening?

Toad Weather is one of those books you can have fun reading more than one time. So, after you read it the first time, read it again and again as you have fun with these activities.

THEMES

Conservation | Habitats | Life cycles

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Compare and Contrast

- Ask students to discuss ways Ally's perspective changes during her rainy day adventure in *Toad Weather*. Use the following discussion prompts to get them started:
 - How does Ally feel about rainy days at the beginning of the story? How does she feel when she's walking home with Mama and Grandma at the end of the story?
 - When she first gets outside, Ally starts to hurry. How is this different from the way Ally walks through the puddles? Carries toads across the street? Or walks on her way home?

- Look closely at the pictures showing Ally when she first sees the toads, when she hears about their life cycle, and when she's carrying toads across the street. How do you think the way she feels about seeing all those toads changes?
- Hold up the book for the class with it opened to the very first spread. Discuss with the children how when looking out the window at the beginning of the story, Ally thinks the rainy day is just gloomy gray. But once outside, she thinks it's like being inside something colorful. Ask students to reflect on the following after looking at the spread:
 - What is that colorful something?
 - Why does she think that?

What Happened When?

Ally discovered a lot of things during her *Toad Weather* adventure. She counted five of them as surprises.

- Ask students to list on the whiteboard those five surprises in the order in which they happened.
- Circle the surprise that Grandma didn't think was a nice surprise.

It's on the News

Ask students to pretend they are news reporters. Based on what happens in the story, have them write a *Toad Weather* news report about this event. Be sure they include a quote from Ally about what it was like to help the toads. Have them include a quote from Grandma, too.

Another Story

- Ally isn't the only child who discovered the migrating toads. Have the class look at the spread showing the little boy shining his flashlight on the toad. Now, ask students to write a short story about his adventure. Have them explain why they think this boy and his mother are outside on a rainy night. Did they come especially to help or just happen onto the scene?
- Based on the picture, ask students how they think the boy feels about the toads. Discuss answers as a class.
- Ask students why they believe he did or didn't help the toads.

Toad's Eye View

- Have students talk about this *Toad Weather* night from one toad's point of view.
- Make this a story about an American toad. That's the kind of toad featured in *Toad Weather*.
- Ask the class to explain how the toad goes from its home in a nearby park to a reservoir on the other side of a busy street. Be sure that they include real facts about these toads by using the Related Reading section at the end of this guide.
- Suggest that the students add some sense of adventure to their stories by giving the toad a couple of close calls. For example, a bird or a dog might *almost* catch it, or it might *almost* get hit by a car before someone carries it across the road.

RESOURCES

BioKIDS – Kids' Inquiry of Diverse Species,
American Toad

[http://www.biokids.umich.edu/critters/
Anaxyrus_americanus/](http://www.biokids.umich.edu/critters/Anaxyrus_americanus/)

Doug Wechsler Books – Toad Life Cycle

[http://www.dougwechsler.com/toad/
toad_life_cycle.html](http://www.dougwechsler.com/toad/toad_life_cycle.html)

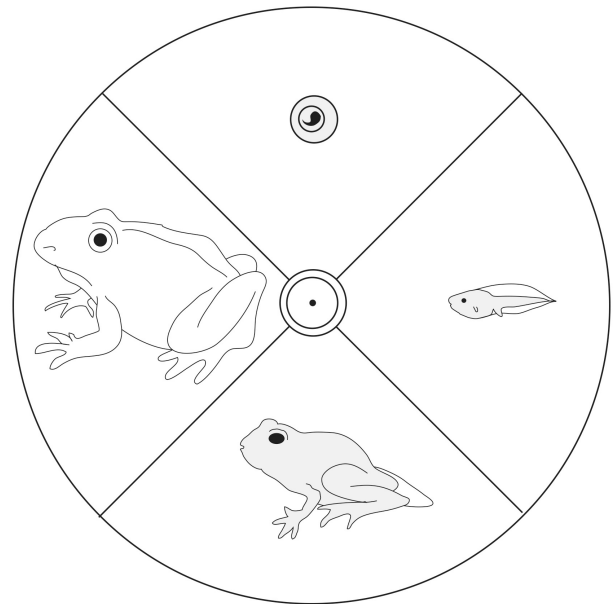
You'll see photos and learn about the stages an American toad goes through during its life.

Dr. Doug Wechsler was one of the experts who shared information and checked the facts included in *Toad Weather*.

Extra Fun

- Give the students copies of the reproducible page at the end of this guide. Have the children create their own *Toad Weather* book cover design.
- Give each student a white paper plate. Have each of them draw lines on the plate, dividing it into four equal parts. Have plenty of crayons, markers, and/or colored pencils available for students to draw and color a picture of one stage of the American toad's life cycle on each part of the plate. (See sample illustration below.)
 - Egg
 - Tadpole
 - Toadlet
 - Adult

Then poke a pin through the center of the plate into a sturdy plastic straw. Spin the plate to see the toad's life cycle repeat over and over again—just as it does in real life.



Sample illustration: American toad's life cycle plate

REVIEWS

“In this attractive picture book, Markle uses a fictional story to supply nonfiction facts. It’s a gloomy, rainy day, and Ally and her grandma feel blue.

But an excuse to shake their doldrums arrives with some exciting news. Ally and her grandma reluctantly pull on boots and rain slickers and head out into the wet twilight streets to check it out, but all they see are the usual puddles, earthworms, clouds, and...toads! Yes, it’s perfect weather for the semiannual toad migration... An author’s note explains the real toad migration in Philadelphia.”

—*Booklist*

“A fine addition to the sense-of-wonder shelf.”

—*Kirkus Reviews*

“It isn’t just the young heroine of Markle’s story who isn’t thrilled about an excursion into the rain—her grandmother is just as grumpy about the idea when the girl’s mother suggests it... But their perseverance is rewarded when they discover why the girl’s mother dragged them outdoors: a mass migration of toads crossing a blocked-off street to lay eggs in nearby water. Helping the toads with their journey proves a bonding activity, and Gonzalez’s pastel, pencil, and airbrush illustrations movingly highlight the softening attitudes of the girl and her grandmother as they get swept up in one of nature’s small, unexpected miracles.

—*Publishers Weekly*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sandra Markle is the author of more than two hundred children’s books, including *Butterfly Tree*, *Snow School*, and *The Long, Long Journey*. Her books have won numerous awards, including *Boston Globe-Horn Book Honor Book*, *IRA/CBC Children’s Choice*, *NSTA/CBC Outstanding Trade Books for Children*, *NCTE Orbis Pictus Recommended*, and *ALA Notable Books for Children*. She lives with her husband, photographer Skip Jeffery, in Florida.

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ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Thomas Gonzalez was born in Havana, Cuba and moved to the United States as a child. An artist and painter, he has directed campaigns for clients such as Coca-Cola, Delta Airlines, NASCAR, the NFL, and McDonald’s. He has illustrated a number of children’s books, including *Gandhi: A March to the Sea*, *The House on Dirty-third Street*, and the *New York Times* bestseller *14 Cows for America*. He lives in Georgia.

www.tomprints.com

Peachtree Teacher’s Guide
prepared by Sandra Markle

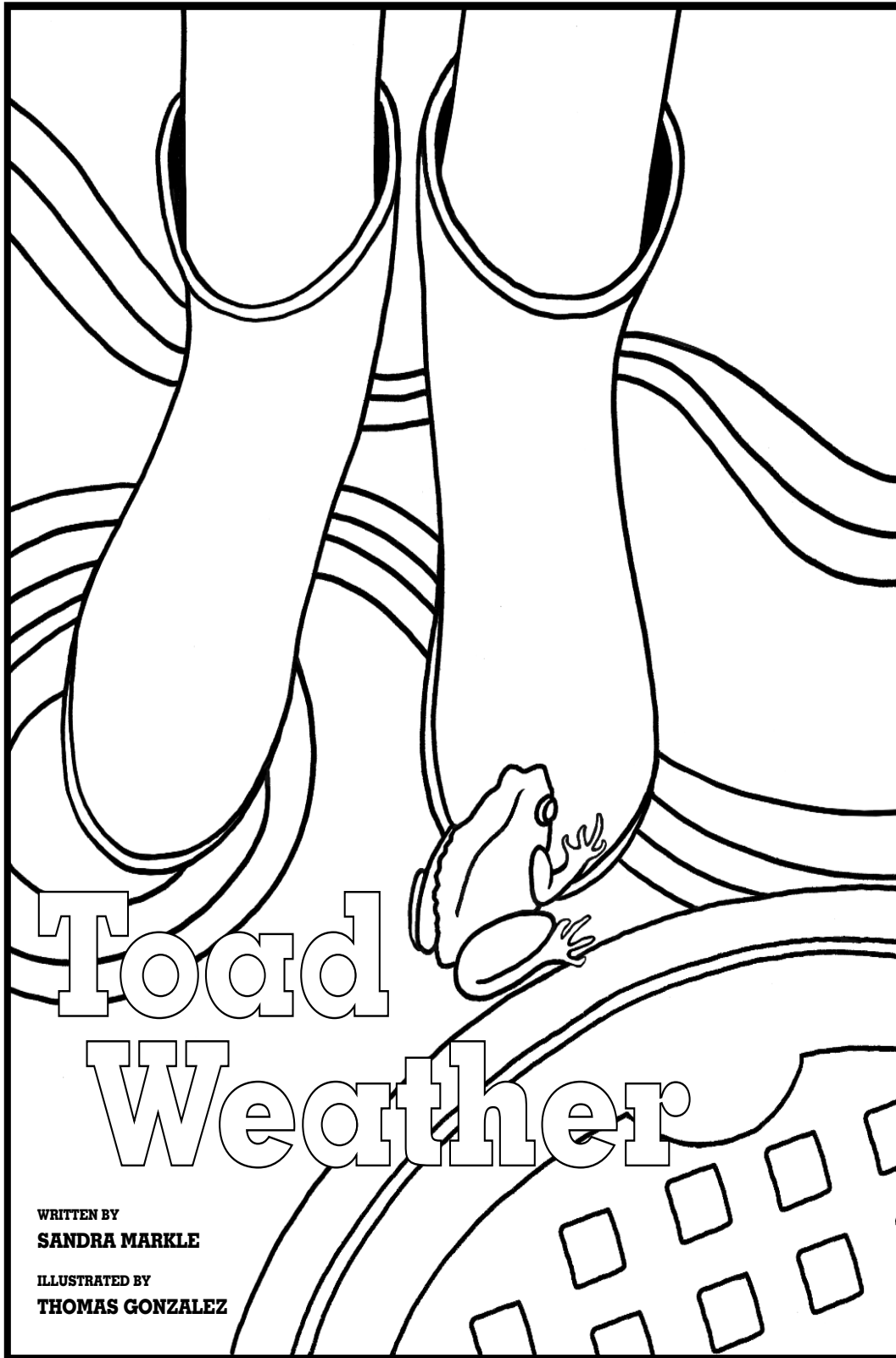
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TOAD WEATHER COLORING PAGE



Toad Weather

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