

Amphibians

Discussion Questions:

- 1) What animals belong to the amphibian group?
- 2) What features do they have in common?
- 3) What types of environments do they inhabit?
- 4) What stages do amphibians go through in their life cycle?
- 5) What impact have humans had on amphibians?



AMPHIBIANS

- Live on land and in water for some part of their life cycle.
- Are ectothermic (cold-blooded)
- Lay eggs.
- Have webbed feet.
- Have moist skin.

FROGS & TOADS



NEWTS & SALAMANDERS



CAECILIANS



Frogs and Toads



Can you describe some features of frogs and toads?



What is the difference between a frog and a toad?



Frogs:

- Have moist, smooth skin.
- Usually lay eggs in clumps.
- Have long hind legs with webbed feet adapted for swimming.



Toads:

- Have dry, bumpy skin.
- Usually lay eggs in long strings.
- Have short hind legs adapted for walking.
- Have poison glands behind the eyes.

Salamanders and Newts



Salamanders and newts live in all continents except Antarctica and Australia. They begin their lifecycle in the water as eggs which, like frogs, develop into tadpoles. They then develop lungs and legs before moving to land. Some salamanders retain their gills and spend much of their time in the water. They have smooth skin and a long tail, often resembling lizards. Most have short legs and some have webbed feet which help them swim.

The axolotl (see picture above) is an example of a salamander that spends its life in the water. It has developed external gills for breathing, allowing it to live permanently in the water instead of moving onto land.

A newt is a salamander that spends most of its adult life out of the water. Newts have the ability to regenerate body parts and many newts have skin that produces a toxic substance for protection against predators.

Caecilians

Caecilians resemble snakes or worms because they have long legless bodies. Some caecilians are able to swim in the water like an eel.

There are nearly 200 species of caecilians. They range in colour and size. Some are eyeless while others have eyes covered by a layer of skin.

Caecilians have many teeth and feed on soil dwelling creatures such as worms and termites. Prey is swallowed whole.

Their adaptations include a protective skin over their eye, a hard skull and a slender muscular body for burrowing underground. Some species have skin that secretes a toxic substance, protecting them against predators.

Caecilians live in the wet, tropical regions of Asia, Africa and South America. They are not often seen because they spend most of their time burrowing underground and under leaf litter.

