

Reviewed by **Victor Lozada**

## The wide-mouthed frog

Written by Keith Faulkner

Illustrated by Jonathan Lambert

New York, NY: Dial Books for Young Readers, 1996

*Alligator Pie* to create a performance. Small group compositions featuring each animal are another possibility.

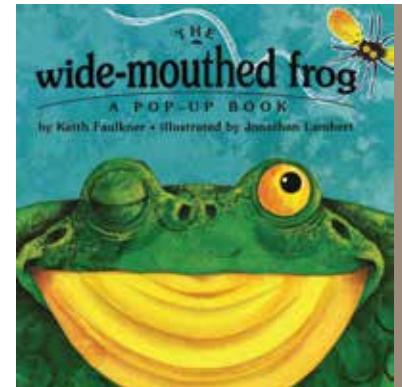
Although this story lends itself

to arranging or composition, other musical possibilities include vocal exploration and the development of movement vocabulary. Children often have fun exploring their voices with the different sounds each animal makes. Shadowing and mirroring techniques connecting with the text construction are an excellent means for exploring various ways the animals might interact.

Cross-curricular associations abound for students to study various ecology, geography, history, and even environmental issues that take place in the Okefenokee Swamp. Our digital natives could use their compositions to create videos that advocate for biodiversity, estuaries, or national refuges.

While reading through *The wide-mouthed frog* and acting out the story, children might recognize a lesson the frog learned at the end of the tale—a little humility can go a long way. Try this story out with your students to enhance movement activities, tell a musical story, or even learn about some environmental issues. You may find this little book makes a big “splash” in your classroom.

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“I’m a wide-mouthed frog, and I like flies,” says the title character in Keith Faulkner’s pop-up book, *The wide-mouthed frog*, illustrated by Jonathan Lambert. The wide-mouthed frog’s quest to find out what other creatures in the Okefenokee Swamp eat leads him to meet some interesting creatures, including a bird, a mouse, and even something that likes to eat a certain type of frog.

Lambert’s watercolor and three-dimensional illustrations add texture and character to each page as the story’s creatures, with their quirky, exaggerated mouths, pop out of the book. Flies, the wide-mouthed frog’s favorite food, taunt him throughout the story until an alligator appears and announces he likes to eat wide-mouthed frogs. At that, the flamboyant frog gulps away his pompousness and shrinks the lips of his wide mouth, puckering it as small as possible, and then leaps away from the alligator and into the pond with a resounding “splash!”

The frog’s opening words, repeated on every page, often lead the music class to tell a story, whether in song or movement. Movement might be inspired by the sounds the animals make, the three-dimensional artwork, or even the textures of the two-dimensional artwork. In addition to movement compositions, classes can have fun arranging folk songs and poems like *Frog in the Meadow*, *Bluebird*, *Mouse Mousie*, or even