



# The life cycle of a frog

Frogs live the first part of their lives underwater as tadpoles. Then they lose their gills and begin to breathe air.

Some animals spend the first parts of their lives in water and the later part of their lives mainly on land. One such animal is the frog (Picture 1).

## Tadpoles

Frogs begin life as eggs. These eggs are found in clumps called frog spawn. When the eggs hatch small tadpoles, called larva, emerge.

Frogs live as tadpoles for about three months. During this time they remain completely in water. Tadpoles start life with gills. The gills are used for breathing – taking in oxygen from the water. Tadpoles eat tiny plants called algae that grow on stones in the water. They use rasp-like teeth to scrape off the algae. Larger tadpoles, however, become more ferocious and may even eat one another if they get too crowded.

When a tadpole is about two months old, it begins to form legs, first at the back, then at the front. At the same time, its tail starts to disappear.

When the tadpole is three months old, its gills change into lungs and it has to come to the water surface to breathe.

When the tadpole no longer has a tail, it sheds its skin and becomes a tiny frog.

### ▼► (Picture 1) The life cycle of a frog.

These adult frogs are mating. The female may lay hundreds of eggs. As she does so the male riding on her back fertilises them.

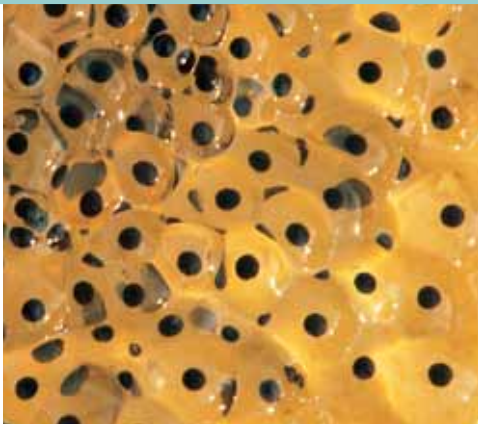


## Frogs

It takes the frog about four years to grow into an adult. Throughout its life on land it feeds on insects instead of plants. It still lives close to water and, when it is ready to breed, the female frog lays her eggs in water so that the tadpoles will hatch underwater.

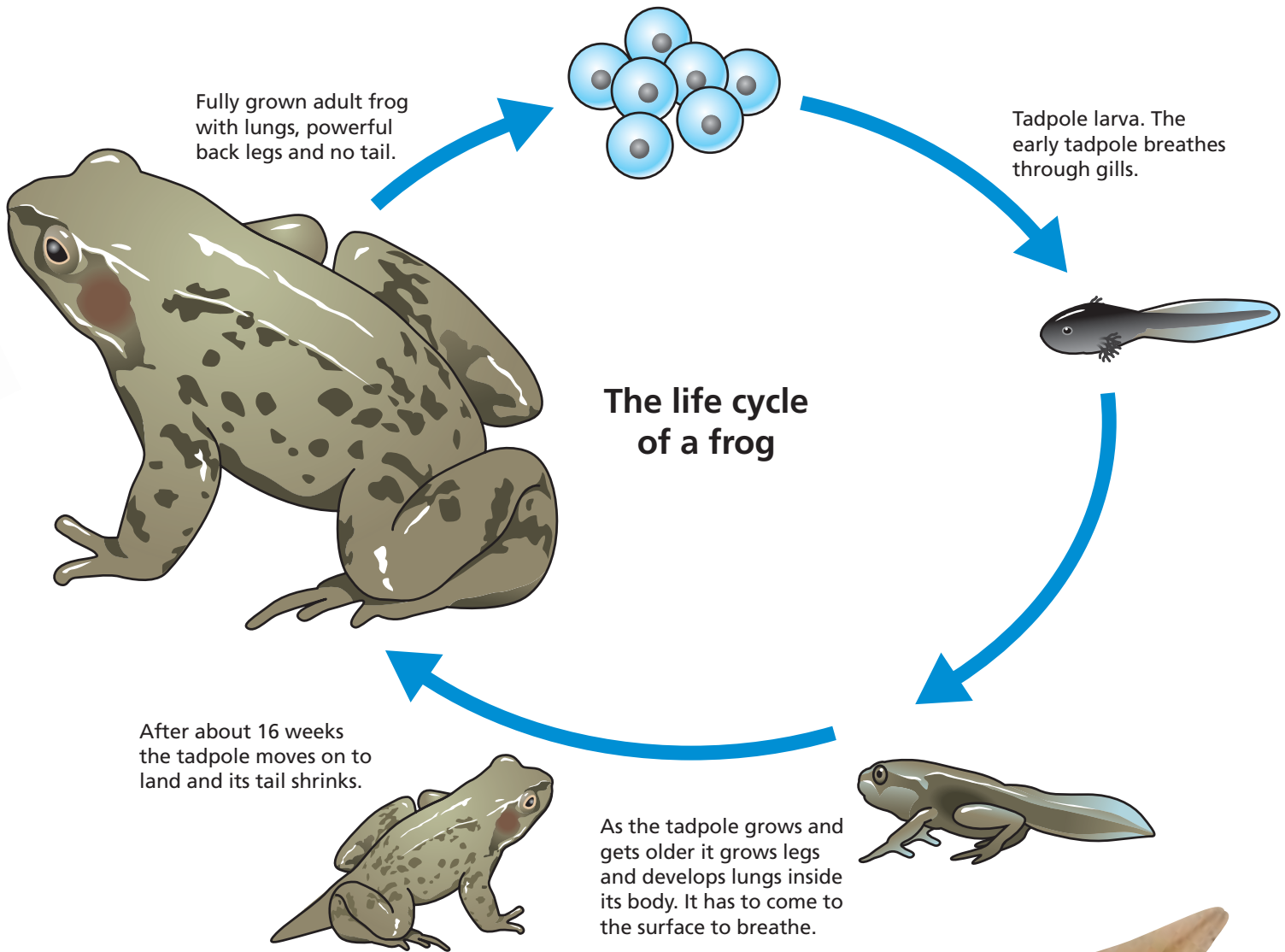
### Summary

- Frogs hatch from eggs as tadpoles.
- Tadpoles live in water and start their lives with gills.
- As a tadpole changes to a frog it develops legs and lungs.



Male and female frogs breed. Females lay masses of eggs – called spawn – in water.

The egg contains yolk. The developing frog uses the food and energy in the yolk to grow into a tadpole. It takes about ten days for the tadpole to form. When it does, the jelly around the egg turns to a liquid and the tadpole wriggles out.



The early stage of the frog is called the tadpole. It is shaped like a fish so it can move easily through the water and has a powerful tail to help it swim. It does not have fins like a fish, which would help it control its movements, so it tends to thrash about in the water. This tadpole is only about 2cm long.

