

PICTURE BOOKS TELL THE STORY

BOOK: _____

BRIEF DESCRIPTION: _____

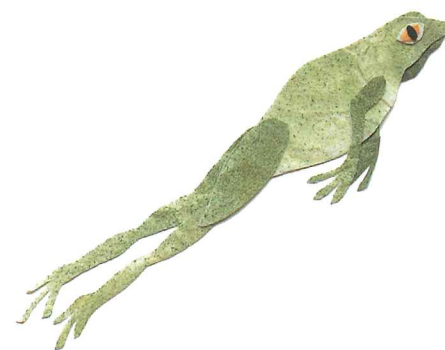
FAVORITE PAGE(S) AND WHY: _____

SOMETHING I LEARNED: _____

Survival of the fittest. The Galápagos finches helped Darwin understand the role played by the environment in evolution. Most plants and animals produce many more offspring than can survive. Many fish, amphibians, and insects lay hundreds or thousands of eggs. If all of the offspring of even a single pair of these animals survived, they would soon overrun the earth. However, almost all of the young perish before they can grow up and lay eggs themselves. Darwin saw that those less fit for their environment—the slower, weaker, and less hardy ones—are more likely to die or be killed. Those best able to escape predators, find food, and survive hardships are the most likely to survive and become parents themselves. Darwin called this process *natural selection*, or *survival of the fittest*.



Natural selection at work. A mother frog lays 3,000 eggs. Most of these eggs are eaten by birds and fish. Of the 200 tadpoles that hatch, few survive. Most are eaten by predators. Ten tadpoles live to turn into frogs.



One frog, able to jump a little farther than its brothers and sisters, escapes from predators and survives.



One dies after moving to a pond that dries up.



Two are eaten by snakes.



One is eaten by a fish.



One is eaten by a bird.



One is eaten by a toad.



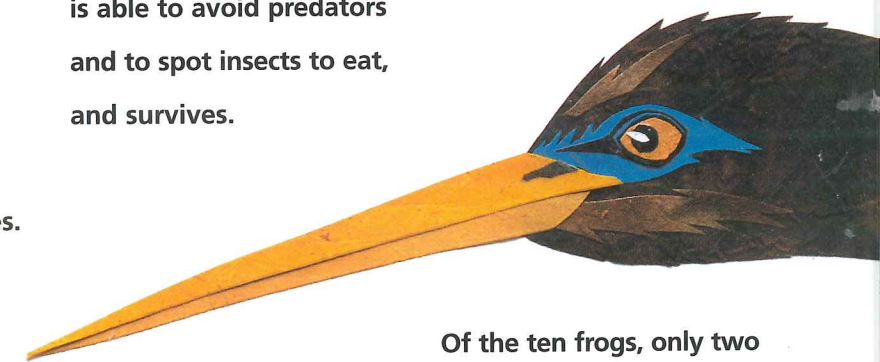
One is caught by a fox.



One can't find enough insects to eat and starves.



One has good eyesight, is able to avoid predators and to spot insects to eat, and survives.



Of the ten frogs, only two survive. One is a good jumper and the other has sharp eyesight. If they reproduce, they'll probably pass on these qualities to their offspring.