

From Spawn to Frog

1 The tadpole

Then the embryo leaves its jelly shell and attaches itself to a weed in the water. It is now a tadpole – a baby frog. The tadpoles are too small to swim away from this weed, which is now their food as well as their home. They grow until they are big enough and strong enough to break free from the weed and swim in the water. They eat other weeds and small plants called algae.

9 The tadpole begins to change

After about five weeks, the tadpole begins to change. It starts to grow hind legs. Behind its head, bulges appear where its front legs are growing. Its tail becomes smaller. Lungs begin to develop, preparing the frog for its life on land. Now and then, the tadpole wiggles to the surface to breathe in air. It eats plants, frogs' eggs and other tadpoles.

16 Almost there

Over time, the tadpole becomes even more frog-like. It sheds its skin and lips. Its mouth widens, and it loses its horny jaws. The tail becomes much smaller, and the legs grow. The lungs are almost functioning at this point.

21 The frog

Eleven weeks after the egg was laid, a fully developed frog with lungs, legs, and no tail emerges from the water. To start with, it is very tiny, and is called a froglet. This froglet will live mostly on land, with occasional swims. The tiny froglet begins to eat insects and worms. Eventually, it grows and becomes a big frog. It will find a mate. The female lays the eggs and the whole process begins again.

