

Report Writing Example

Amphibian Pets

If you want a pet that comes when you call, don't get a newt. But if your pet doesn't have to perform tricks, you might enjoy an amphibian. You don't have to walk amphibians, bathe them, or housebreak them. The most common amphibian pets are the newt, frog, toad, and salamander. Over the years, I've had all these animals and know they can be enjoyable pets. But it's necessary to understand them and to provide them with a good home.<

Amphibians lead a dual life. They are the only animals who live both in water and on land. They are born in water and are adapted for this purpose. Most amphibians begin life as tadpoles and have gills for breathing underwater. As they mature, most amphibians lose their gills, and except for the salamander, develop lungs. The salamander survives on land because it, like all amphibians, can breathe through its skin. Adult amphibians also have backbones and most have legs, enabling them to move around on land.

Amphibians are not slimy and ugly, as many people seem to think. The skin of an amphibian is smooth, cool, and moist, and pleasant to touch. Also, amphibians can be quite beautiful. Frogs and toads, for example, have cat-like eyes. The pupil of a toad is shiny black with a golden iris. In addition, many amphibians have striking coloration. The leopard frog, for example, is a shiny bronze and green. On its back and head are the yellow spots that give the frog its name. The ordinary tree frog is a brilliant green. The spotted salamander is shiny black with yellow spots. Many other amphibians are just as striking in appearance.

Although you can buy amphibians in a pet store, it's easy to collect your own. In the springtime, find a still pond or small lake in the country. Look for a mass of jelly-like eggs floating on the surface of the water or a string-like collection of eggs on the bottom. Fill a jar with pond or lake water and add some green plants. Scoop up the eggs and take them home in the

jar. Until the eggs begin to develop, you can leave them in the jar or transfer them to an aquarium.

As the eggs develop into larvae, you will need to feed them. Frog and toad larvae are vegetarians. They will eat algae from the pond, lettuce, and cornmeal. Salamander larvae, however, like insects and insect larvae. As the larvae mature, you will have to prepare a suitable terrarium for the adults. Cover the bottom of a tank with a layer of water. Insert a flat rock that sticks out above the water surface, or float a piece of wood on the water. Try to make the terrarium as much as possible like the amphibians' natural environment. Put in clumps of moss, small plants and rocks, and pieces of bark. Keep the terrarium shaded and in a cool place. Amphibians do not like temperatures above 60 degrees. Adult amphibians like to eat insects such as crickets, flies, or even roaches. They will also eat lean ground meat.

You will need to watch your amphibians for injury or disease. Adult amphibians sometimes fight with each other and injure themselves. Sometimes, they develop a fungus at the site of the injury. Also, there are many amphibian diseases. Some of the diseases are actually similar to human diseases. Salamanders, for example, can develop leprosy. Frogs and toads may come down with rickets, a disease of the bones. If your pet amphibian becomes ill, isolate it from your other pets and consult your vet.

Your amphibian won't be sleeping on the foot of your bed, but with some coaxing, it can learn to eat from your hand. With time, your pet will develop a personality of its own. You have truly found a friend in nature.