

Grade 7 Literacy
Week of January 4 – January 8

Lesson 3: Poem – Amphibians

Immigrants coming into a new country come with their own identity partly based on their culture and way of life from their native country. In addition, their identity changes as they become part of a new culture.

Amphibians

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Amphibians live in both.

Immigrants leave their land,
hardening in the sea.

Out of water.

In Greek, *amphibian* means
“on both sides of life.”

Terra and *aqua*. Shoreline.
In fresh water:

amphibians lay
shell-less eggs;
immigrants give birth
to Americans.

Tadpoles, polliwogs
metamorphose: gills
in early stages. On land,

amphibians develop lungs.
Immigrants develop lungs.

Through damp skin
amphibians oxygenate.

Immigrants toil
and sleep breathlessly.

Skin forms glands.
Eyes form eyelids.

Amphibians seek land; immigrants, other
lands.

Their colors brighten, camouflage.

They’ve been known to fall
out of the sky.

Fully at home in the rain.



Finding Meaning in Structure

1. This poem is very carefully structured as the author compares immigrants to amphibians. Explain how the content of the poem is organized to do this.

2. Using one or two specific examples from the poem, explain in your own words how this comparison is effective and perhaps helped you to understand a little better the journey of an immigrant.

3. Consider the line "Their colors brighten, camouflage" that is talking literally about amphibians. What do you think this is saying about immigrants and their new life?