Introduction

This guide outlines the important stage of “planning” for your final stop-motion animation video. You will be introduced to the process of storyboarding and storytelling, and view examples of other students’ work. You will then be introduced to the process of creating a collaborative storyboard.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this lesson, you will be able to:

- Explain the importance of storyboarding and storytelling in relation to your stop-motion animation project;
- Use various media and technology to convey messages and meaning;
- Work interactively, co-operatively and collaboratively to plan and create a storyboard;
- Use the technique of brainstorming to identify a topic for your group animation production;
- Engage in critical reflective thinking as part of the decision-making and problem-solving process;
- Invent and incorporate unique visual symbols and movement to create personal meaning in art;
- Appreciate the diversity of individuals, as reflected in their artwork.

Storyboarding Your Idea – Telling a Story

Great animation starts with a great “idea” for a story. Telling stories is an age-old method used to communicate ideas and recreate and preserve culture, memories and traditions. By learning how to tell a story through animation, you will be challenged to use symbols and movement to effectively convey your messages and stories. The intent is to tell a meaningful story that expresses a strong message to its intended audience.
Individual Learning Activity: Storytelling and Inspiration

Frédéric Back, author of the acclaimed, Oscar-winning animated film The Man Who Planted Trees, is an inspirational figure. His work is an expression of his dedication to a message of peace and respect for the Earth and its communities. Back has created several outstanding animated films that can inspire your students to tell their own meaningful stories. The web pages below explore how his passion for the environment led Back to make animated films in the hope of making this world a better place. fredericback.com/ateliers/index3.en.shtml. (See themes 6 and 7).

All animation productions (and many live-action productions) begin life as a storyboard, which is a script of sorts written with images as well as words, similar to a giant comic strip. Storyboarding includes scene planning, which requires you to plan out the scenes of your movie from start to finish before you begin animating. Your storyboards will incorporate the key poses in the story; in-betweeners will be incorporated later. Your group will need to figure out the acting and timing requirements for each scene. Please ensure that your group devises a distinct beginning, middle and end to your story. Remember, the better you plan, the better your animated video will be!

To learn about storyboarding at the NFB, watch the following video:

Storyboarding Your Idea (4 min 30 s)

To view the storyboard examples found in the video, click on the NFB Mediatheque Storyboard Sheet and NFB Completed Storyboard.

Introduction to Teamwork and Brainstorming

You will create your movies in collaborative teams. Your teacher will assign you to a Production Team of four to six people for the conceiving, planning and production stages of the studio portion of the stop-motion animation lessons. All teams are expected to work in a respectful and collaborative fashion. Each team member should participate equally and share tasks. As each team member will bring their own unique expertise and talents to the group, everyone’s ideas and contributions to the project are to be considered valuable. If you work together effectively, are committed to the project and use your group’s diversity of skills, your team’s final product will likely be much better than if you had completed the project on your own!

The Stop-Motion Animation Rubric see Annex 01 provides guidelines for your team and identifies how each section of the production process will be graded. The high percentage allocation for the teamwork component of this rubric reflects the view that strong teamwork skills are deemed essential to working successfully in the competitive real world of animated film production.

Group Learning Activity: Brainstorming a Topic

Your first task as a team is to effectively brainstorm ideas to help in the selection of a good topic for your animated video. Please identify relevant themes from the following list of subjects.

- English
- Math
- Science
- Social Studies
- Health
- Arts (Art, Music, Theatre)
- Technology
- Media Literacy
- (for advanced curriculums—grades 7 and up)

Some popular and relevant themes identified for your age group include:

- Bullying
- The Environment
- Substance Abuse
- Active Healthy Lifestyles
- Racism, Diversity & Body Image
- Fishing
- “endangered species” “ocean” “marine life” “life” “death”
- “pregnancy” “birth” “teen pregnancy” “marriage” “friendship”
- “family” “war” “peace” “gravity” “electricity” “pulleys & levers”
- “tsunamis” “earthquakes” “equilibrium” “microscopes” “bacteria”
- “nuclear energy” “mutations” “sickness” “disease” “cures” “AIDS”
- “magic” “legends” “fantasy” “tables” “myths” “witches” “fairies”
- “leprechauns” “metamorphosis” “ecosystems” “lightning”
- “icebergs” “polar bears” “tragedies” “whales” “hunting” “fishing”
- “trapping” “sports” “murmuring” “sealing” “special occasions” “peer pressure”
- “discoveries” “famous events” “outdoor space” “wonders of the world” “planets” “stars” “black holes” “mountains”
- “forests” “waterfalls” “music” “occupations” “poverty”

You may choose a topic from the above themes, or think up one of your own. The Thought Bubble below may help you brainstorm. Once your team identifies a theme, you may want to research it on the Internet to help you come up with a specific idea for your animation. The idea that you select should be interesting and meaningful to all team members.

Note: Please take your time when devising your topic and story for your animated video, as this initial decision will affect all other steps of the production process!
Creating a Collaborative Storyboard

Once your team has come up with a potential topic for your animation, you will need to have your idea approved by your teacher. Once given the go-ahead, your group will need to begin storyboarding.

Learning Activity: Cartoon Animation

Watch the following NFB video to learn how an artistic animated film is made and to get an idea of the enormous time commitment involved in storyboarding.

Sleeping Betty: Interview with Claude Cloutier (2007, 4 min 32 s)

Synopsis: Animator and director Claude Cloutier talks about his film, Sleeping Betty, and the process of animation. (Recommended for grades 7 and up.)

Storyboard Websites

To see examples of the intricacy of storyboards made by professional artists, please visit the following websites:

Stephen McCallum’s Animation/Media Production

(Storyboard for the NFB’s From Flores, 1991)

Michael Sporn Animation, Inc.

(Storyboards from the Disney classics Sleeping Beauty and Cinderella)

The Necktie: Animated Storyboard (2008, 1 min 27 s)

Questions you might want to consider include:

- What is your setting?
- How many characters do you need in the shot?
- Do you need any important props in the shot?
- What type of shot (close-up, wide shot, establishing shot, etc.) do you need?
- What is the shot’s angle (i.e., how/where is the camera positioned)?
- Do you need any special lighting? The lighting depends on what type of mood you’re trying to convey (for example, you may need candlelight, moonlight, a dark alley or a bright sunny day).
- Will you use any special effects?
### Remember, all great stories start with a great idea. Great stories make great animation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXCELLENT</th>
<th>VERY GOOD</th>
<th>GOOD</th>
<th>NEEDS IMPROVEMENT</th>
<th>MARK %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>IDEA FOR STORY</strong></td>
<td>The idea for the story was excellent. Message extremely clear.</td>
<td>The idea for the story was very good. Message very clear.</td>
<td>The idea for the story was good. Message fairly clear.</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>STORYBOARD</strong></td>
<td>Extremely well planned—excellent flow. Drawings extremely effective in conveying the actions and emotions of story.</td>
<td>Well planned—very good flow. Drawings very effective in conveying actions and emotions of story.</td>
<td>More planning required—flow needs work. Actions and emotions of story not clearly conveyed in drawings.</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHARACTERS</strong></td>
<td>Characters are extremely interesting—excellent effort. Characters are extremely suitable to storyline.</td>
<td>Characters are very interesting—very good effort. Characters are very suitable to storyline.</td>
<td>Characters are vague—more effort required. Characters’ suitability to storyline is unclear.</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SET/PROPS</strong></td>
<td>The set/props do an excellent job of enhancing the production’s aesthetics and mood.</td>
<td>The set/props do a very good job of enhancing the production’s aesthetics and mood.</td>
<td>The set/props need effort to help enhance the production’s aesthetics and mood.</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DESIGN</strong></td>
<td>Students display excellent knowledge of design elements.</td>
<td>Students display fairly good knowledge of design elements.</td>
<td>Students’ knowledge of design elements lacking.</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MOVIE PRODUCTION</strong></td>
<td>Movement in the movie is very smooth. An excellent attempt to incorporate “principles of animation” and/or “tricks” into movie.</td>
<td>Movement in the movie is smooth. A good attempt to incorporate “principles of animation” and/or “tricks” into movie.</td>
<td>Movement in the movie is irregular/jumpy. The incorporation of the “principles of animation” and/or “tricks” is not apparent.</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CREATIVITY</strong></td>
<td>Extremely creative work.</td>
<td>Work is creative.</td>
<td>More thought and creative effort required.</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TEAMWORK</strong></td>
<td>The team worked extremely well together—shared tasks and activities.</td>
<td>The team worked very well together—shared most tasks and activities.</td>
<td>The team had difficulties working together and sharing tasks and activities.</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL** /100
### NFB STORYBOARD SHEET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BEGINNING</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<th>MIDDLE</th>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>END</th>
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</tbody>
</table>
Storyboard

Action
Character walks to middle of frame.

Action
Character spins quickly, apple appears in left hand during spin.

Action
Character places apple on teacher’s desk, exits to left of frame.
# Storyboard Rubric

**All Storyboards Start with a Good Idea for a Story.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rubric</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Very Good</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Needs Work</th>
<th>Mark %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scene Selection</strong></td>
<td>All main events of the story are identified through choice of scene selection.</td>
<td>Most main events of the story are identified through choice of scene selection.</td>
<td>Some main events of the story are identified through choice of scene selection.</td>
<td>The main focus of the story is on “non essential events”; some scenes are incomplete.</td>
<td>/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Captions</strong></td>
<td>Captions clearly identify each scene and help to connect the storyline.</td>
<td>Most captions clearly identify each scene and help to connect the storyline.</td>
<td>Some captions clearly identify each scene and help to connect the storyline.</td>
<td>Captions don’t clearly identify each scene or help connect the storyline.</td>
<td>/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Characters</strong></td>
<td>All main characters are identified; their actions and emotions match the storyline extremely well.</td>
<td>All main characters are identified; their actions and emotions match the storyline very well.</td>
<td>All main characters are identified, but their actions and emotions don’t always match the storyline.</td>
<td>The main characters are not well identified; their actions and emotions are unclear in relation to the storyline.</td>
<td>/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Set and Props</strong></td>
<td>The set/props relate extremely well to the purpose, mood and coherence of the story.</td>
<td>The set/props relate very well to the purpose, mood and coherence of the story.</td>
<td>Some of the set/props relate fairly well to the purpose, mood and coherence of the story.</td>
<td>There is difficulty relating the set/props to the purpose, mood and coherence of the story.</td>
<td>/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thinking Skills</strong></td>
<td>All ideas are generated and organized in a logical sequence. The plot is quite original and creative. The message is very clear.</td>
<td>Most ideas are generated and organized in a logical sequence. The plot is very original and creative. The message is clear.</td>
<td>Some ideas aren’t generated and organized in a logical sequence. The plot is fairly original and creative. The message is somewhat clear.</td>
<td>Most ideas are not generated and organized in a logical sequence. The originality and creativity of the plot is lacking. The message is unclear.</td>
<td>/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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