Teacher lesson plans

This book contains comprehensive information about a wide range of topics relating to making stop motion. When used in a classroom, teachers can easily derive lesson plans for curriculum activities. The following pages outline some possible lesson plans.

1. Write a 3-part story which develops a premise
2. Write a story into a script
3. Write the script for a 30 second TV advertisement
4. Create a plasticine character
5. Create a set at scale
6. Record a soundtrack in GarageBand
7. Record stop motion pictures in iStopMotion
8. Animate a LEGO® character to walk
9. Animate a character to talk
10. Dramatise an action sequence
11. Develop an interactive whiteboard illustration
12. Create a time lapse
13. Add a title and credits in iMovie

Most activities can be undertaken in groups of up to three students.

Each lesson plan contains:

- A list of required prerequisites, equipment and resources
- Time allowance. Increasing the time will allow students to focus on quality improvement
- References to relevant pages in this book
- Suggested areas for assessment.

Newtown Movie School

1

Write a 3-part story which develops a premise

Learning area: English narrative development

Requires paper, pen and a copy of table on page 22*.

Allow 60 minutes.

Lesson plan reference

- Page 16; Whole group discussion on the importance of a story

- Page 19, step 1; Working individually, or in groups of up to three, write a premise

- Page 19, step 2; Brainstorm questions which develop the premise

- Page 20; Write the story in three parts. Hand out copies of the story outline table on page 22*. Students need to write at least one sentence for each of the seven prompts.

Key things to assess

- Originality of premise

- At least one sentence for each of the seven prompts in the story outline

- Logical idea development.

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*You can download a copy of the story outline at *stop-motion-handbook.com/downloads.html*

2

Write a story into a script

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Learning area: English narrative development

Requires completed story outline from Lesson 1, paper and pen.

Allow 60 minutes for a one minute movie. Adjust for longer movies.

Lesson plan reference

- Page 23, step 4; Take the 3 part story outline developed in Lesson 1 and write the story into a script. Students need to determine the characters, locations, actions and lines of dialogue to support dramatising the story

- Guide students on script parameters, for example:
  - include at least three characters with speaking lines
  - no more than 2 locations (this will simplify artwork requirements)
  - movie duration (this will determine the length of the script). A one minute movie should have 8-16 lines and fill about half a page. A five minute movie could fill 2-3 typed pages.

Key things to assess

- Accuracy of interpretation of story outline from lesson 1
- Character development
- Meets stated script parameters.

Alternative task

Take a well known story and write the script in the style of a particular genre (see page 17). For example - *Cinderella* as a spy movie, *The tortoise and the hare* as a romance.

3 Write the script for a 30 second TV advertisement

Learning areas: English, Arts, Social Science

This is an alternative exercise to develop a script. It requires writing that is both clear and brief.

Requires paper and pen.

Allow 60 minutes. Full completion of the stop motion advertisement (Lessons 3 to 7) could be achieved in around 4 hours (thirty seconds of stop motion using 12 pictures per second is only 360 pictures). Adverts should be self explanatory and don't need titles. Add credits for all adverts after the last one.

Lesson plan reference

- Group discussion on TV advertising

- Page 31, steps 1 to 4; Guide students on product or service parameters, such as:
  - something to promote healthier lifestyle
  - something to make you richer/save money.

  The goal of most advertising is to convince someone of their need to buy a product or service. It can be a fun and challenging task to advertise something that no one wants, such as cobwebs, traffic jams, cat pee, dirty socks or teachers.

For presentation, use iMovie to edit together all class advertisements into a 'commercial break' as they would appear on TV.

Key things to assess

- Suitability of product or service for stated guideline
- Persuasiveness of proposed benefits
- Realistic and practical artwork requirements
- Script can be read in less than 30 seconds.

4

Create a Plasticine character

Learning area: Arts

Requires art working space, wire, Plasticine, beads, modelling tools (see pages 74-75). Students may need supervision with use of bonding agent for armature.

Allow 60 minutes.

Lesson plan reference

- Page 75; Make an armature for a character and then mould it with Plasticine. The character should be able to stand balanced and have some limb movement (see also examples and tips on pages 76-77).

Key things to assess

- Solid construction and ability for some limb movement
- Ability of character to stand balanced
- Good use of colour, detail and overall presentation.

Create a scene set in scale

Learning areas: Arts, Maths

Requires art working space, art materials and access to camera, tripod and stage. Younger students may require supervision with scissors for cutting cardboard.

This exercise assumes that characters (LEGO®, Plasticine or other) for the stop motion have been created.

Allow 60 minutes.

Lesson plan reference

• Pages 83; Temporarily set up stage and camera. Look through camera and mark the maximum height, projected character head height and horizon area on background

• Pages 80-85; Create the artwork for background and props in the same scale as the character.

Key things to assess

• Appropriate size and proportion of background detail when viewed through camera

• Appropriate scale between characters, props and background

• Good use of colour, detail and overall presentation.

Record the soundtrack in GarageBand

Learning areas: Computer skills, Arts, Music

This activity can be achieved with students in the group taking turns to record the voices of each other, or with a helper to operate GarageBand, so all students in group can focus on their voice role.

Requires a recording space (see pages 56-58), microphone and computer with GarageBand (see pages 33-35). Students with musical ability could use USB keyboard or guitar.

Advanced students can be assessed to set up recording location with the criteria on pages 56-58

Allow 1-2 hours to complete 1 minute soundtrack. Adjust for longer soundtracks, those which make significant use of sound effects or require music composition.

Lesson plan reference

- Group discussion on general topic of music copyright and specific guidelines for use of music in soundtrack (see page 32)
- Page 33; Group discussion on questions at bottom of page
- Page 41-50, steps 1 to 8; with reference, as required, to pages 36-71.

Key things to assess

- Clarity of speech
- Appropriate tone and passion of voices
- Appropriate selection of music and sound effects
- No use of music without copyright clearance
- Minimal unwanted and background noises.

7

Record stop motion pictures in iStopMotion

Learning areas: Computer skills, Arts

Recording stop motion pictures is best done with longer sessions because of the set up time required. If you have an area that can be left set up, students can make progress with a series of shorter sessions.

Requires:

- soundtrack from Lesson 6, or other source
- a room with tables where lighting can be controlled
- stop motion stage set, characters, backgrounds, props, camera, tripod and computer with iStopMotion.
  See pages 94-103 for set up of camera and lighting.

Hands-on experience of simple animation effects is a valuable learning exercise before completing the first movie.

Allow 1-2 hours per 30 seconds of movie, plus set up time.

Lesson plan reference

- Page 108; Pre-recording checklist

- Page 115-126, steps 1 to 8; Making a stop motion.

See also pages 86-93 (picture composition), 113-114 (using iStopMotion), 136-145 (creating visual effects), 152-154 (avoiding common mistakes).

Key things to assess

- Image composition. Good use of manual focus

- Good camera movements to dramatise the story and follow the character who is talking. Steady camera at all other times

- Appropriate character movements

- Consistent lighting

- Minimal common mistakes (see pages 152-154)

- Logical file naming system (see page 12).

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8 Animate a LEGO character to walk

Learning areas: Computer skills, Arts

Making a character walk is a fundamental skill for using LEGO® in stop motion. It can be adapted for other character mediums.

This skill can be incorporated into an actual movie, or as a list of prescribed activities: walking, running, dancing, moon walking, dodging bullets '*Matrix*' style, turning around and slow walk, or whole body expressions, such as showing surprise.

Requires stop motion stage set, characters, camera, tripod and computer with iStopMotion.

Allow 60 minutes.

Lesson plan reference

- Pages 130-131.

See also pages 128-129 to use a video recording as a reference for movements.

Key things to assess

- Realism of movement
- Hand and head movements
- Integration with props, eg picking something up.

9

Animate a character to talk

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Learning areas: Computer skills, Arts, English

Can be used to dramatise a poem or text extract, instead of a story.

Requires stop motion stage set, characters, camera, tripod and computer with iStopMotion.

Requires a soundtrack with narrative or spoken lines, from Lesson 6, or another source.

This skill can be achieved as a specific activity (allow 60 minutes) or incorporated into a larger movie.

Lesson plan reference

- Pages 132-135; Communication is a fundamental skill for making movies, and more important for stop motion because all visual clues to the dialogue must be produced by the character's ability to talk. The range of possible and appropriate mouth movements will depend on the medium used for the character

- For scenes with a number of characters talking refer to Rule 1 and Rule 2 on page 122.

See also pages 86-91 for information on picture composition.

Pages 128-129 to use a video recording as a reference.

Key things to assess

- Convincing lip sync
- Good camera movements to follow story and the character who is talking.

10

Dramatise an action sequence

Learning area: Computer skills, Arts

Knowing when to move the camera, and when not to, are key skills for creating stop motion (see Rule 1 and Rule 2 on page 122).

This activity is to choose an active sequence (such as sport, battle, dance, race to build a tower, Plasticine art formations) and to move the camera as much as possible, to engage the audience in the flow of the action, while maintaining good composition and story flow.

Requires stop motion stage set, characters, camera, tripod and computer with iStopMotion.

This skill can be achieved as a specific activity (allow 60 minutes) or incorporated into a larger movie.

Lesson plan reference

- Page 143-144

See also pages 86-91 for information on picture composition.

See 'Rule 2' on page 122.

Key things to assess

- Image composition
- Good camera movements to follow the action in the story
- Steady camera and stage at all other times
- Appropriate character movements
- Consistent lighting
- Minimal common mistakes (see pages 152-154).

11

Develop an interactive whiteboard illustration

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Learning areas: Computer skills, Arts

Whiteboard stop motion is a quick start process as it does not require the preparation of characters and backgrounds.

An internet search for *'whiteboard stop motion'* will provide many inspirational examples of a whiteboard as a medium for stop motion art.

Requires whiteboard and markers, camera, tripod, computer with iStopMotion.

Allow 60 minutes, plus additional time to create a soundtrack (Lesson 6).

Lesson plan reference

- Page 147; A whiteboard can be used as:
    - a medium for telling a story with a soundtrack
    - an expression of moving art with a music backing added later.

Key things to assess

- Logical evolution of character shapes
- Useful or clever inclusion of other elements, such as a hand appearing to create or stretch certain elements
- Picture composition and use of screen area
- Steadiness of board and camera.

12

Create a time lapse

Learning areas: Computer skills, Science, Arts

Requires camera, tripod and computer with iStopMotion.

This is best done over a period of hours, but depending on the topic could be a much longer duration.

Lesson plan reference

- Page 112; Set up a camera in a vantage point to record a process for observation and analysis:
  - chemical reaction such as a melting ice block, water evaporation
  - nature study such as a flower opening, butterfly hatching
  - study of movement such as traffic queues at different times of day, people waiting for a bus, tracking shadows across playground.

See also example on page 150 which uses time lapse as a security system.

As a variation in visual style see Tilt Shift example on page 151.

Key things to assess

- Interesting choice of subject matter
- Suitable camera angle and camera settings
- Appropriate picture rate (FPS) for purpose.

13

Add a title and credits in iMovie

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Learning areas: Computer skills, Arts, English

Requires completed movie and computer with iMovie.

Allow 60 minutes.

Lesson plan reference

- Page 171-174; Add a title sequence and credits to an existing movie.

Key things to assess

- Spelling
- Appropriate style of title and credits to support the movie and not overpower it
- Final movie exported with same picture size as original iStopMotion movie.