What is animation?

Art and Design

Animation, stop-frame, animator, movie, character, flip book, CGI (Computer Generated Imagery)

• To understand what animation is.
• To understand the premise of stop frame animation.

Lesson activity

Starter: What is animation?

• Ask the class to name some of their favourite animated movies and explain why they like them. These suggestions can be written on the IWB. Prompt with suggestions such as Shrek, Madagascar, How to Train Your Dragon and Kung Fu Panda if required.
• Now show slides 3-5 which demonstrate some of the different styles of animation: traditional, stop-frame and computer-generated. Encourage children to look at each type and comment on some of the differences they notice in creative style.
• Explain how animation is the process of displaying still images in a very rapid sequence to create the illusion of movement.

Task 1 and 2: Make a flick or flip book

• You may want to create your own flick book to show children before starting this task. Explain that a flip or flick book is a book with a series of pictures that change gradually from one page to the next, so that when the pages are turned rapidly, the pictures appear to move.
• Using a simple design – such as a ball bouncing, stick man jumping or a simply-drawn bird flying, ask pupils to create their own version using 10 images.
• Explain that the smaller the movements between each page, the smoother the movement will be when they flick their finished book.
• For help with this activity, you can use the template on Worksheet 1 which features a progressed drawing which children can copy or trace into the right hand corners of their books.
• Once they have drawn all 10 pictures, they can flick the corners of the book and watch the pictures move.

Plenary:

• Using Worksheet 2, children should list three key learnings they will take away from today’s lesson.
Lesson activity

- **Cross-curricular / extension opportunities:**
  - **Science:** Investigate the workings of the human eye with your class, including the Persistence of Vision theory which enables us to see multiple rapidly moving images as a single image. Other optical illusions can also be explored.
  - **History:** Children can be directed to the work of Edward Muybridge, an English photographer and the first person to discover that when a horse is galloping, there is a split second when all four hooves are off the ground. He created a device which helped animate his photographs into short moving sequences, laying the groundwork for the future of motion pictures.

Homework

Children can be encouraged to explore some early forms of animation, such as the Thaumatrope, which means “turning wonder,” which was one of the first optical toys. We have included a template and instructions for making your own Thaumatrope within these materials.

Notes

This four week block of lessons should be used before and after a visit to Shrek’s Adventure! London. Armed with an understanding of how animation is created, children will be able to take inspiration from their visit to the attraction to create their own group stop-frame animation in lesson 4.