Creating your characters & setting

Subjects
Art and Design, DT

Key words
Background, setting, props, characters

Learning objectives
• To work with different materials and processes to achieve a finished item.
• To work collaboratively in a group to complete a finished set piece.

Lesson content

Lesson activity

Starter:
Lesson brief
• Recap on the previous lessons and inform groups that this lesson will be their opportunity to create the background for their animation, the character/s and any props they think they will need.
• Assign roles to each group member, so they are clear what they will be making during the session and how.

Task 1 and 2:
Creating your background, characters and props

Creating the backgrounds:
• Using an A2 sheet of paper, groups should draw or paint the background setting they selected in the last lesson.
• Alternatively, a large cardboard box or shoe box can be themed and used as the setting instead. This approach allows groups to make an active background, whereby a cut can be made in the back of the box and items moved slowly (frame-by-frame) as part of the animation. This could work well for a setting sun or the Magical Flying Bus blazing across the sky.

Creating the characters:
• Children will also need to create their characters using their chosen material. Any groups working with the character split-pin puppets should cut them out and colour them in from the templates provided before inserting split-pins through the areas marked on the templates. Teacher assistance will be required for this.
• Children choosing to work with the split-pin puppets might like to glue an ice lolly stick to the back of their characters so that they are able to stand them vertically during the animation process. They will also need Blu Tack or modelling clay to ensure their characters can stand without falling over. Alternatively they can create a 2D background and animate their characters flat against it.
Lesson content

Lesson activity

Task 1 and 2: Creating your background, characters and props (cont.)

- Advise any children creating characters from Play-Doh or Plasticine to ensure they are sturdy enough to stand.
- Ensure that children work together to make sure the characters fit inside the backdrop and that the props are proportionate in scale to the characters.

Creating the props:

- Groups should also use this lesson as an opportunity to create any props they feel might be necessary for their animated sequence.
- Once the characters, backgrounds and props have been created, they should be left overnight to dry.

Plenary:

- Ask groups to highlight any problems they encountered during the lesson. How did they overcome these problems? What might they do differently if asked to do this task again?

Cross-curricular / extension opportunities:

- Music: Now that groups have a completed storyboard, they should think about whether they would like to include any sound effects, dialogue or music to their sequence. If so, thought should be given to how the necessary sound effects will be created and any dialogue should be recorded.
- Drama and ICT: Children can be tasked with researching how sound effects are created in movies. This function is performed by a foley artist, whose job it is to create incidental sounds in a film and is designed to make the experience more realistic for the audience. Here are a few ways these sound effects are made: Fire: crunching up cellophane or wax paper, Rain: sprinkling rice or seed onto a metal sheet or other thin surface, Walking through leaves: crunching cornflakes or crisps together with your hands or feet, Can children think of any other imaginative ways to create a range of sound effects?

Homework

Invite children to bring in any items that can be used in their animation. They may have small toys/props that will benefit their sequence.

Notes

This lesson requires groups to create their characters and backgrounds for their animation. You may wish to extend this lesson over a few sessions depending on the complexity of the characters and set designs. On the next page is a list of art and craft materials you might wish to include for pupils to work with.
Art and craft materials

- Cardboard boxes and toilet roll tubes
- Cotton wool (for clouds)
- Ice lolly sticks
- Pipe cleaners
- Glue
- Googly eyes
- Paints
- A2 sheets of paper
- Plasticine / Play-Doh
- LEGO
- Blu Tack
- Scraps of wallpaper or wrapping paper
- Tissue paper