

Participant Handout for Stop-Motion Animation Workshop

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Goal

To create a short (<1 minute) stop-motion animation of a story.

Part 1: Tell me a story about water!

I want you to tell me a story about water! This can be a story from your own life, or a made-up story. Remember, good stories usually have some sort of take-home message or point to them.

Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Do you have a story about an activity you like to do in the water - fishing, swimming, boating, etc.? What do you see or feel when you do that activity?
- Have you experienced a time when there was too much or too little water around you? A drought? A flood? A fire?
- Do you have a garden, a potted plant, or a pet? Does it need water? What happens if it gets too much or too little water?
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Use the space below to write out a short story about water. Aim for the story to be about 1-2 paragraphs long.



Part 2: Trim your story down to only one sentence!

Some stories are long and complicated, and that is fine! But for animating stories, we want them to be as short and sweet as possible. The goal here is to take the story you wrote on the last page and try to say the main point or take-home-message of the story using only one sentence.

For example, here is a full story I wrote:

- When it was sunny and dry last summer, all the plants in my garden started to wilt. But then it rained on them and they started to grow again. At the end of the summer those plants had tomatoes! We ate them in salsa. The plants wouldn't have grown if they didn't get watered by the rain.

In this story, the real key point is that the water from the rain made the plants grow. All those other details are good to think about, but we need to have that one-sentence story to focus on when we work on the animation.

So, my story trimmed down to one sentence is:

- Rain makes the garden grow.

Use the space below to work on trimming your own story down to one sentence. It might be helpful first to trim it down to two or three sentences then try to trim those sentences down even further, rather than trying to do the whole thing at once.



Part 3: Sketch it out!

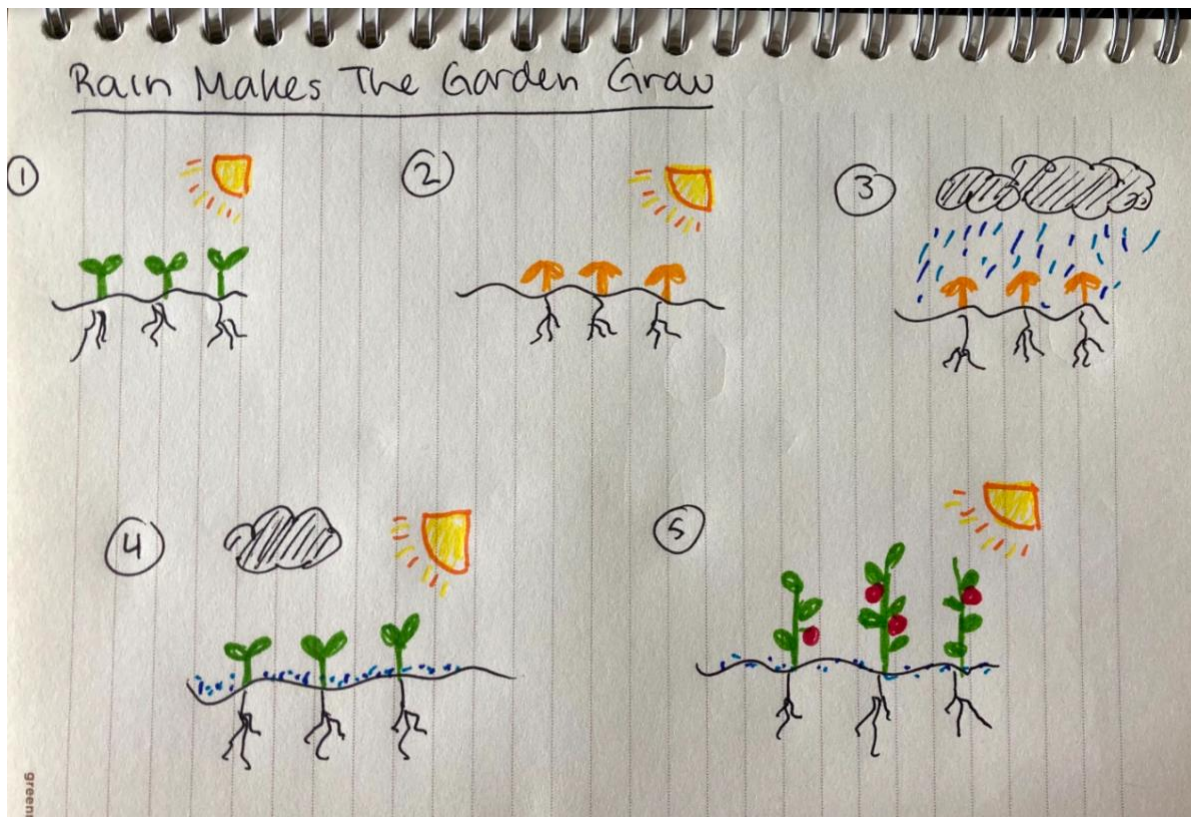
The stop-motion animations we are going to make don't have any spoken words, and usually no written words or just a few written words in the animation itself.

How can you possibly tell a story with no words? You might have actually done this before - try to think about how you could tell your one sentence story in a game of charades or pictorial.

Now, sketch out 3-6 pictures like a comic strip that tells your story.

If you can't tell the story in 3-6 pictures, the story is too long and/or complex for this!

Here is an example of my story, rain makes the garden grow, sketched out.



Use the boxes below to sketch out your story like a comic strip. You don't have to use all of the boxes. Remember, try to do this without using any words in your comic strip. Just drawings.

1.	2.
3.	4.
5.	6.



Part 4: Pick the characters and scenery!

Now we are going to look at our sketched stories and identify the key elements and “characters” in the story.

What objects and/or people are doing something? Are they changing from panel to panel? These are your characters! They don’t have to be living things - a cloud could be a character, a fish could be a character, a person could be a character, the sun could be a character, and so on.

What is the background scenery? This is what you put in the background to look nice and set the scene, but it doesn’t really change from panel to panel in your sketch. This is usually the land, the sky, and maybe some trees or houses or rocks.

For example, in my “rain makes the garden grow” story, the background scenery is dirt with plant roots in it and the sky. These set the scene and don’t really change from panel to panel in my sketches.

For characters, that will be everything that changes or actually does something. The sun is doing something - it is shining on the plants. The clouds are doing something - they are raining on the plants. And the plants are doing something and changing - they start green, then wilt without water, then get green again and grow when it rains. So, these are all my characters.

Use the space below to list the characters and the background scenery from your story.

Background Scenery Characters



Part 5: Make your characters and scenery from craft supplies!

Now, when we do stop-motion, every time a character changes what it looks like we need to make a new version of it. If the character is just moving around, we don't need to make a new version of it.

For example, in my story the sun is just going to be shining and the rays are moving around, so I only need to make one sun with little rays I can move. The plants are going to change color though, so I need to make green happy plants, yellowish-green wilting plants, and yellow wilted plants. Three versions of the same character (plants).

Here is an example of all my characters and scenery cut out and ready to use!



If your story has a person with two facial expressions - one happy and one sad, you will want to make a happy version of them and a sad version of them to use in your animation.

Use the space below to sketch or list all the versions of characters you will need to make, as well as all the scenery items. Once you have finished listing/sketching them, start making them! Use whatever you think would be fun - construction paper, toys, things you find outside like rocks and sticks and grass, etc.



Now you're ready to animate!

See the Workshop Guide or follow along with the live workshop to learn how to turn your sketched story and craft pieces into a stop-motion animation!

You can view my example animation here: [rain makes the garden grow](#)

