

Serif MoviePlus Project 5



Move it

Project brief

In a team of 5 or 6 create an animated one-minute movie aimed at a teen audience that has a clear plot and at least two characters. Somewhere in Space exists another planet whose inhabitants look very different from humans, but whose teenagers face similar problems to those on Earth. The storyline should treat a youth issue of current concern in the media – smoking, bullying, drugs, anti-social behaviour, or negative stereotypes of youth, for example – but through the lifestyle of your alien creatures.

Curriculum focus

Art and design – Unit 9C: Animation

KS3NS English framework - Year 8 Text level, Writing 8 - Develop an imaginative or unusual treatment of familiar material or established conventions; Year 9 Drama 14 – Convey action, character, atmosphere and tension when scripting and performing plays

Citizenship – Unit 02 Crime: Section 07 Stereotypes and young people

Movie genre

Stop motion animation, also known as stop frame animation.

Note:

Industry standard film animations run at 25 frames per second (fps), making movement seem 'natural'. Persistence of vision is the phenomenon that tricks our brain into believing that a sequence of still images flashed before the eye moves, because the retina records and retains each one for a tenth of a second before processing the next. The rate of frames per second affects how smooth a movement appears. Thus, at a professional standard, even a one-minute animation would need about 1500 stills. Prepare to accept jerkier movement, or aim for a shorter movie! The default time for still images dropped onto the Timeline in MoviePlus is 0.05 second: this gives a rate of 20 fps and will reduce the total number of still images required. If you adjust the timing for each still to 0.04 second, the rate reaches 25 fps, but more pictures will be needed.

Learning objectives

- To research a youth issue
- To develop characterisation, a script and storyboard for an animation
- To create models with moveable parts
- To make a set and props
- To capture the storyline using stop-motion photography
- To use MoviePlus to edit the video and make titles and credits
- To record a soundtrack for the edited movie
- To export the movie in a suitable format for viewing

What you need

- Modelling and other art materials
- DV camera with still picture option, or web cam, or digital camera
- Tripod
- Studio lights (optional)
- PC with sound recorder e.g. Windows
- Serif MoviePlus

Project outline

Pre-production

- Plan and storyboard the movie, including making decisions about different types of shot, sound effects, whether to script dialogue or a voiceover, or use silent movie techniques with screen captions.
- Make the models, props and set. Design models with features that can be refashioned for different expressions, and with at least one moveable limb.

Production

- Set up the camera on a tripod, allowing for different types of shot (long, medium, close up), but making sure that the set is always framed. However, keeping in mind that one second of film requires 25 stills, let any shot last for at least one or two seconds. Move the models by about one finger width for each shot, but make sure that you return them to the correct position after adjusting expressions, pose etc: mark the position with chalk, then rub it off when the figure is replaced. Mark the position of the tripod on the floor with coloured tape.
- As image capture will take some time, possibly lasting several lessons, try to control the lighting to avoid screen flicker – studio lights with daylight bulbs are ideal, but may not be available.

Post-production

- Make a project folder for each group with another folder inside it called *project_stills*. Download still images to this folder and keep them as numbered files to help sequence them correctly.
- Open MoviePlus, choose the PAL Video CD setting for your project and use the Explorer pane to browse to your *project_stills* folder and drop the images in turn onto Video Track 1 on the Timeline. Save your project to your main folder.
- Preview the movie and adjust timings if desired (see the note on fps).
- Make a title frame and end credits for your movie.
- Add transitions between scenes and any special effect that contributes to the narrative, but use only one at most.
- Play the movie through and log timings for the soundtrack accurately.
- Read the script while previewing the video and make revisions to fit the timing.
- Use a sound recorder like the one in Windows (Start > Programs > Accessories > Entertainment > Sound Recorder) to make the soundtrack, which could be recorded in several short segments. Save the sound files to your project folder.
- Use the Explorer pane in MoviePlus to open this folder and drop your sound files onto Audio Track 1 on the Timeline.
- Adjust the volume at appropriate points, or add additional sound effects on Audio Track 2. Preview and edit the soundtrack.
- When you are happy with your movie select the Export button on the Standard toolbar and choose MPEG Video (*.mpg) as the file type, VCD PAL from the template list and set the export Quality to High, then click the Export button. When MoviePlus finishes composing your movie you will be able to view it in your computer's default media player.

Extension/differentiation

Design a poster and leaflet or fact sheet to advertise your movie and get the message across using Serif PhotoPlus or Serif PagePlus

Criteria for success

- The message was unambiguous, and the movie addressed the issue effectively.
 - The storyline and script were imaginative, original and appropriate for the intended audience.
 - The characterisation, setting and action enhanced the storytelling.
 - The stop-frame photography used a variety of shots and had good continuity.
 - The soundtrack supported the plot and the dialogue, if any, was clear and in sync' with the action.
 - Titling was legible and effective.
 - Editing enhanced narrative and pace.
 - The group collaborated well as a team.
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