



Making a stop frame animation...

You will need:

- The characters or objects you are going to animate
- A set – a fabric backdrop or a set you have built in a cardboard box
- A digital camera with a tripod
- A computer with animation software such as **Frame Thief** or **I Can Animate**
- A desk lamp

Activity:

1. Position your characters in the set. Put your camera onto the tripod to keep it steady
2. Connect your camera to your computer, open your animation software and start a new project.
3. The software will ask you to click to create a still image. You then move your character once and take a further still – this is called a 'frame'. Keep going like this until you have a series of frames.

Each piece of software will work slightly differently, but some good general rules to follow when making an animation are:

- Take plenty of frames of the background and of the establishing or opening shots
- Think about how long in seconds you want each movement to last for and then work out how many frames that will be. Animators will usually shoot 12 or 24 frames for each second of film, so you can plan your characters' actions around this.
e.g. to make your character blink, shoot three frames with the eyes on them, then remove the eyes and take three frames
- If you are filming with someone else then you will need to make sure you are careful not to film each other's hands! Before you begin filming each shot say 'Action!' then the other people know to move their hands so they won't be included in the shot.



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- Tiny movements create a much more convincing animation
- Use lights to brighten your scene – a desk lamp works well
- Vary your camera shot and angle – this will make your film more interesting but only do it at the end of a scene!
- Make sure you only change your characters' positions at the end of a scene
- Have plenty of facial expression changes
- Change more than one thing about a character at a time
- If you want your animated character to speak you will need to develop a script and record the dialogue and any sound effects separately, making sure the timing fits with the characters' movement!

If you want to watch some examples of stop frame animation, check out 'The Alien Who Came to Tea' and 'The Magic Rockpool' on The Family Friendly Film Festival website.



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