

# Creating a revolutionary 2D stop-motion animation

*Suitable for students of all ages*

2D stop motion animation is a traditional method of bringing still objects to life in film. To do this an object is moved by small increments and photographed each time it is moved. When the photographs (or frames) are played back in sequence it gives the impression of movement – or animation.

This is a great way to explore people, ideas and events from the Age of Revolution, and to relate them to students' lives today.

You can see our Age of Revolution animated film here [ageofrevolution.org/an-animated-introduction-to-the-age-of-revolution/](http://ageofrevolution.org/an-animated-introduction-to-the-age-of-revolution/)

And see a simple, illustrated, step-by-step account of how we made it here. [ageofrevolution.org/making-our-age-of-revolution-animation/](http://ageofrevolution.org/making-our-age-of-revolution-animation/)

## 1. Inspiration

Use our Revolutionary collection [ageofrevolution.org/200-objects/](http://ageofrevolution.org/200-objects/) of extraordinary objects and images to introduce students to the Age of Revolution. You could look at the Age of Revolution as a whole, concentrate on a theme [ageofrevolution.org/themes/](http://ageofrevolution.org/themes/) – like Transport [ageofrevolution.org/themes/economic-and-technological-revolution/transporting-revolution/](http://ageofrevolution.org/themes/economic-and-technological-revolution/transporting-revolution/), Riots and reforms [ageofrevolution.org/themes/social-and-cultural-revolution/challenging-law-and-order/](http://ageofrevolution.org/themes/social-and-cultural-revolution/challenging-law-and-order/), the French Revolution [ageofrevolution.org/themes/war-and-the-international-order/french-revolutionary-and-napoleonic-wars-1792-1815/](http://ageofrevolution.org/themes/war-and-the-international-order/french-revolutionary-and-napoleonic-wars-1792-1815/) or the Industrial Revolution [ageofrevolution.org/themes/economic-and-technological-revolution/the-impact-of-industry/](http://ageofrevolution.org/themes/economic-and-technological-revolution/the-impact-of-industry/), or focus on objects that you and your students are drawn to simply because they are intriguing, beautiful or familiar.

Our Education section [ageofrevolution.org/education/](http://ageofrevolution.org/education/) is packed with a range of guides [ageofrevolution.org/education/guides/](http://ageofrevolution.org/education/guides/) and activities [ageofrevolution.org/education/activities/](http://ageofrevolution.org/education/activities/) to help with this, particularly **Introducing the Age of Revolution** [ageofrevolution.org/education/activities/introducing-the-age-of-revolution/](http://ageofrevolution.org/education/activities/introducing-the-age-of-revolution/)

Show students our Age of Revolution animation as an example [ageofrevolution.org/an-animated-introduction-to-the-age-of-revolution/](http://ageofrevolution.org/an-animated-introduction-to-the-age-of-revolution/)

They could also watch other animations to look at different styles and techniques – try this helpful BBC film [bbc.com/ideas/videos/the-animation-genius-youve-probably-never-heard-of/p05t9bsn](http://bbc.com/ideas/videos/the-animation-genius-youve-probably-never-heard-of/p05t9bsn) which explores the animation pioneer Lotte Reiniger's simple and charming 2D animation work.

They could also have a go at making simple flick books.

## 2. Generating ideas

Plan a simple story with the class that can be divided into five or six scenes – or one scene per group in the class.

Each group makes a large 'scene map':

- Write the focus of the scene in the centre of a large piece of paper
- Talk about who might be in the scene and what might be happening
- Students create drawings and write notes to record their ideas. They could write their ideas in thought bubbles and stick them on to the sheet, and use speech bubbles to show what their characters are saying.

The group uses these ideas to create a simple storyboard of their scene.

They also make a list of all the elements – characters, props, background objects etc – they will need to make for their animated scene (they might need to share some of these between groups if characters or objects appear throughout the whole film).

## 3. Creating the elements for your animation

*To make a 2D card puppet:*

- Draw your puppet onto thin card – puppets which fit easily onto an A5 sheet are about the right size
- Draw the body, arms, legs and head separately
- Colour-in or decorate the puppet
- Cut out all the different parts
- Stick it together with Blu Tack, using only a little on each joint.

*To make scenes for 2D animation:*

- Use large sheets of paper for the background of your scenes – A3 or A2 should be large enough.
- Make all the other elements of the scenes (trees, buildings, cars etc) separately on thin card, this way you will be able to arrange and stick them down on your background paper using Blu-tack when you come to animate.

## 4. Animating

Download a simple stop-motion animation app to a tablet or smartphone. An app like *I Can Animate* works well.

*Filming:*

- Film in small groups, 2-4 per tablet
- Set up your tablet using a rostrum style stand that can be placed onto a table-top with the artwork beneath it, like this...



- ...If you don't have a stand then place the ipad on the edge of a tabletop (be sure to secure it with strong tape) and place the artwork on the floor beneath it. This works just as well.
- Make sure your ipad is set up correctly to animate. Check the exposure, white balance and focus are *all locked* (there is an option to do this on the *I can animate* app)
- Tape down the background paper of the scene you are filming then arrange and stick down the elements of the scene using Blue Tack.

- You are now ready to start animating with your puppets.
- Move the puppets in small increments and use the app to record (photograph) each frame.
- If you want to add sound, you can do this using the *I can animate* app, or another app like *iMovie* or *Movie-maker*

*Why not roll out the red carpet and have a special screening when your animation is finished?*

#### 5. Tips and pointers for a quality result

- Natural light from windows can cause colour fluctuations in your animation. If possible, use blinds or stick up sugar paper at the window to block this out and use artificial light – which is more constant.
- Move the characters a very small amount, a centimetre at the most each time should give the impression of average speed.
- To make objects move faster or slower make the increments they are moved smaller to move slower or larger to move faster.
- Make sure everyone's hands are out of shot before a 'photo' is taken.
- Don't let any shadows cover the artwork – avoid standing between any windows and your animation scene.
- Film your animation in sequence; this gives you a clear idea of how the film is developing.
- Create a pause at the start of each new scene or between the sequences of action by taking about 12 frames as a still. This will help the pacing of your film.
- If your students want to be more ambitious they could try including a mixture of wide, medium and close-up shots. Move the scene and the ipad closer together or further away from each other to achieve this.

**The most important thing to remember is that animation is really good fun, enjoy the creative process and be confident of the outcome.**

Animation notes by Skidaddle Films [skidaddlefilms.com](http://skidaddlefilms.com) with Age of Revolution.