



CLAYMATION INCURSION PREPARATION

Please circulate this document to the teachers of all the classes involved in this incursion

Your classes will gain the most from their incursion if you have done some preparatory work before the session, this allows me more time to concentrate on the technology and refining ideas on the actual day.

Before your incursion I will supply a CD containing a large number of resources for your claymation preparation, incursion day and after the incursion so that students can continue their editing.

1 Discuss what claymation is with the students:

Most students will have seen claymation movies or commercials. Another name for Claymation is stop motion animation.

Stop motion animation is the process where moveable figures or items are repositioned with a tiny movement change many, many times and “still photographed after each repositioning”. They are then put together using editing software and combined with narration, sound effects, titles and credits to create a film that gives the appearance of lifelike movement from figures that were not alive. For a few seconds of movie such as the “Smackos Add” , there would be several hundred, possibly thousands of photos taken.

Like any film, a Claymation movie aims at telling a story /and /or conveying an idea / entertaining people

Have a look at the original claymation figure - Gumby

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gumby>

Or a more current example - Wallace and Gromit

<http://www.wallaceandgromit.com>

Can your students name any other claymation movies?

2 Discussion – why use claymation rather than real actors and animals?

e.g. Advantages-

Plasticene figures can do things real people can't do. (No danger) You are not limited by reality. These figures can be very exaggerated for a better effect.

You don't have to pay for actors

You can take your time creating the movie.

The actors don't get sick.

No big studios or sets and props needed.

Anyone can do it

e.g. Disadvantages

You may still need actors for the voices.

It takes a long time to model and remodel the figures (sculptors skills)
The photo process is very slow and boring

3 What Makes a Good Claymation Movie.- You are a film critic

View the samples on your CD and discuss what would have made these movies better and what was good about them

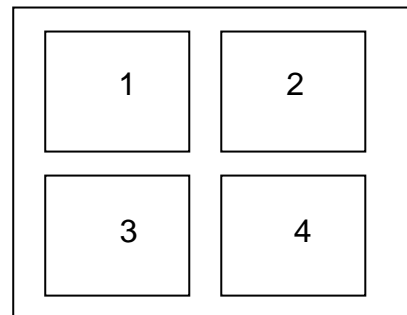
4 What's your story?

Best outcomes are obtained if teachers allow students time before the incursion to decide on a theme/topic, create a storyboard &/story with a **maximum of 4 scenes**

A storyboard is a set of simple drawings , a little like a comic book cell, where the key idea for the scene is illustrated.

The students story should be very basic with only one **stage setting** and a **maximum of 3 figures.**

The students will be working in pairs so please allow them to work in pairs on the storyboard, they will need to bring their storyboard with them on the day.



Keep the idea/ story VERY simple, if the idea is too complex we will not get enough photos in half a day to do it justice.

e.g.

- 1 Girl is walking down street
- 2 Girl sees lost dog
- 3 Girl sees boy in wheelchair calling for dog
- 4 Girl returns dog to grateful boy.

Can it be done?

The technology, time and resources we have on the incursion day are fairly basic, please discourage students from having grandiose ideas regarding their story. e.g. multiple changes of scenery, hurricanes, etc.

Think Creatively

How will you do it? Many things are possible! We will use black thread to cause objects to “fly”, hang, etc. e.g. Rock climbing, falling, ball throwing. Recently some students required that their figure swam, we did this by using blue cover paper with a hole in it and propped up about 7cm with the figure in the hole. We manipulated the paper and the figure to give the illusion of waves and swimming. It's all about the illusion!

Narration and voice-overs- students should be told that as their movie will most likely only run for about 40 seconds no narration will be possible. They are encouraged to include sound effects / written story during the editing process using Movie Maker.

5 Scenery & Props

I will supply stages that already have scenes painted on them but usually the students like to create their own scenery. If possible, I will drop these items into your school several weeks before your incursion so that students can arrange their scenes.

My stages have these scenes- beach, hills, city, hills with rainbow, room with door and window. I have 15 stages- 1 per 2 students.

If students are painting their own scenery, it will be "Blue tacked" onto the scenery shell.

Best film results are achieved if the scenery is :

- ☞ Painted rather than pencil / pens
- ☞ Uses strong flat colour rather than lines.
- ☞ Is not too "busy"
- ☞ Is high contrast colours rather than just all dark colours, try not to use a large area of strong reds as they don't film well.



I will provide lamps to light scenes to achieve best film results

Props.

I will also supply a large range of props but usually student like to add to this with items they make or bring from home. Too many props will make your movie look very cluttered and confused. Students often like to bring their own props from home or make props before the day, I encourage this.

6 Characters

The students should have a good idea of their characters from creating their storyboard. Ideally, students should create their own characters out of plasticine. However; in practice there is not sufficient time in a half day incursion for students to undertake this process as well as set up a stage with props, take around 200 still photos and then edit in Movie Maker. In addition, when working under pressure students often create spindly plasticine figures that don't stand up well and deteriorate rapidly when they are re posed or under lights. Experience has lead me to use wire pose able figures rather than plasticine for these intensive short claymation incursions.

Schools can opt to use my selection of 62 pre decorated figures that I will deliver to the school prior to their incursion day. This will allow students time to select their figures and "bond" with them so that they can incorporate them into their story and storyboard.




Zart Little People		
Little bodies with flexible arms. These people may be decorated, painted and made into your favourite book characters or family members etc.		
SMALL (9 CM)		
each.....	\$1.02	\$1.12
MEDIUM (14 CM)		
each.....	\$2.00	\$2.20
LARGE (21 CM)		
each.....	\$2.80	\$3.08

Other schools opt to purchase "blank" wire figures and have their students decorate them as part of their art classes ahead of their incursion day. These figures (pictured below) can be purchased from Zart Art Phone 0398901867, ask for Zart Little People, medium sized.

AFTER YOUR DAY

It's probable that students will not have completed their editing. You will need to provide time for them to complete this process (see your CD for instructions on how to edit. The students photos will also be provided on CD) though they will have started this in your session.

Using "Windows Movie Maker"

The procedure "glues" all the photos together in a movie and finishes the movie in the following steps.

- ☞ Import the photos
- ☞ Drag the photos you wish to use onto the Movie Maker Storyboard- review your movie
- ☞ Remove photos you don't want- review your movie
- ☞ Repeat photos you wish to repeat- review your movie
- ☞ Add titles, credits and any cells that will have the written story.- review your movie
- ☞ Add sound effects- review your movie
- ☞ Finalise movie

Your CD contains comprehensive directions about this process the draft movie

My Software –

[RGS AvaCam - freeware](#) image capture software that works with most webcams

Windows Movie Maker - This program is included on all Windows system computers.

The great thing about this software is that students can access the software at no additional cost to continue their claymation in their own time.

7 Saving the Students Movies, Projects and Photos

My computers are set-up with individual folders for each session , student's work will be saved in these. At the end of your incursion I will copy these folders onto a DVD so that students can continue to edit/reedit their movies.

Students will locate their work in the MOVIE and PHOTO folders in the Day 1 or Day 2 folder. Then

look for their computer number. Then click on Movie _(your computer number , then class) or Photos_(your computer number , then class). A is the first class on the day, B the second class etc.

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Example for computer 2, class A:  
  DAY 1  
    COMPUTER_2  
      MOVIES_2  
        MOVIES_2A  
        MOVIES_2B  
      PHOTOS_2  
        PHOTOS_2A  
        PHOTOS_2B
```

They can find all the music and sound FX in the SOUNDS folder on the DVD so they can keep editing.

On the day I take a list of which student used what computer, I also provide a note to each student with details of which computer they used.

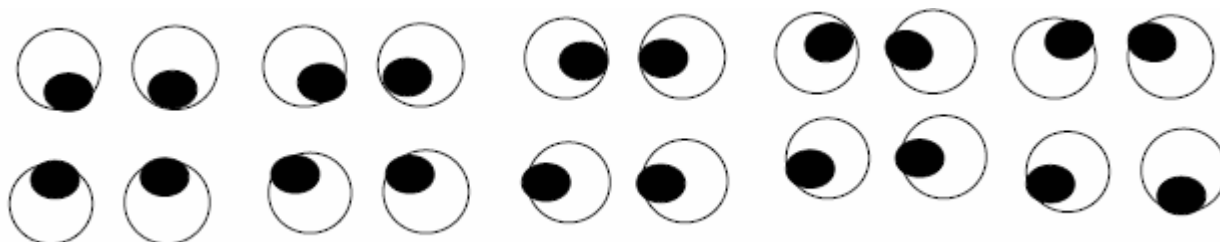
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Other related Activities Prior to the Day

Flip Book Activity.

This activity demonstrates the fact that small increments in movement can be combined together progressively to give the appearance of movement in something that is actually still. This is the way Claymation works.

Have the students cut up stiff paper around 7cm square, 30 pieces , staple together along the right side to create a simple book. Ask the students to draw a circle to be the head (use permanent markers that show through onto the next page or press quite hard with your pencil so that the next page shows the indent- this is called registering , it shows where the preceding image was placed) Within the circle draw a simple face with big eyes and move the eyeballs , mouth and nose around just a little bit on each subsequent page.



My website provides you with a 16 frame flip book that you might like students to assemble to further demonstrate this aspect

<http://www.techellenttraining.com.au/Flip%20Book.pdf>

Pivot Stick Figure Animator – Freeware

<http://www.snapfiles.com/get/stickfigure.html>

This simple application is fun and allows students to work with a simple stop motion animation program.

I have also provided a simple **Power Point animation** that shows how the illusion of movement can be created.

Though these are only 2D Animations the concepts are the same for Claymation.

<http://www.techellenttraining.com.au/Butterfly.ppt>

My preparation CD (provided to you, free prior to your incursion) contains a Larger Power Point Animation called “The Legend of Uglybird” .

Room Set-Up and Logistics

Please refer to your Incursion Check list and Incursion Logistics Document

