

Ethel & Ernest

Learning Resource

Create a 2D Animation



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Ethel & Ernest is based on a graphic novel by Raymond Briggs, who has also written and illustrated other well-known books including *Fungus the Bogeyman*, *Ivor the Invisible*, *Ug and The Snowman*. *Ethel & Ernest* is a hand-drawn animation recreating Raymond Briggs' instantly recognisable style.

In this activity learners will focus on how characters are drawn and brought to life, using animation software to recreate sequences from *Ethel & Ernest*.

Resources needed:

- Interview with Mat Williams, Assistant Art Director (in Video)
- Interview with Robin Shaw, Art Director (in Video)
- Interview with Andy McPherson, Animator (in Video)
- Interview with Iona Menzies, Junior Assistant Animator (in Video)
- *Ethel & Ernest* backgrounds (in the Gallery)
- *Ethel & Ernest* character sheets (in the Gallery)
- *Ethel & Ernest* props (in the Gallery)
- iPads with Loop, iMotion or Stop Motion Pro and iMovie apps (dependent on activity)
- Pens and pencils
- Craft materials

You may want to enlarge the backgrounds, characters and props to make it easier for students to work with them.

Teacher instructions

2D Animation using Loop

This free app lets you easily create short hand-drawn animations on your iPad and share them via email, Tumblr and in the Loop gallery. You may wish to try hand-drawn animations having experimented and thought about the persistence of vision with the **Make a Thaumatrope** or **Make a Flick Book** activity.

1. Watch the *Ethel & Ernest* trailer and discuss with learners what this story is about and the characteristics of the characters. You may like to use the questions on the **3Cs and 3Ss question card** as a basis for discussion.

2. Watch the *Interview with Mat Williams, Assistant Art Director*, *Interview with Robin Shaw, Art Director*, *Interview with Andy McPherson, Animator* and *Interview with Iona Menzies, Junior Assistant Animator*.

As learners watch each interview ask them to identify anything that surprised them about the process of creating the artwork and animation in the film. For example, did they expect artwork to be created by hand? Did they expect there would be so many stages to the hand-drawn animation? Did they expect such attention to detail in the period costume and settings? Which part of the process would they like to work on and what skills do they think people working on the creation of *Ethel & Ernest* require?

3. Provide learners with the *Ethel & Ernest* character sheets and ask them to choose a character to work with. Learners can cut out a character and draw around the outline on the iPad screen if they wish.

4. Support learners to use Loop to animate a simple sequence, for example Ernest tipping his hat in greeting, Raymond bouncing a ball, Ethel watering the garden, Ernest delivering the milk, or Ethel pouring the tea.

Top tips for using Loop:

- Use the onion skin function to be able to see the previous position of the objects in the frame
- Use the Import guide movie function to import a piece of footage from the camera roll to use as a guide for the animation
- Use the eraser, there is no 'undo' function
- Email the completed animation and then it can be saved to a PC or laptop for sharing elsewhere.

2D Animation using iMotion or Stop Motion Pro

These apps allow learners to easily create high quality animations. The apps can be used to create claymations or else to scale-up the animation, for example drawing on a whiteboard or using the wall or window as the background for large paper cut-outs. In this case guidance is provided to create 2D animation using paper cut-outs.

The activity could be used to bring learners ideas about the story of Ethel and Ernest to life, having read the book and/or synopsis of the film or to recall key moments of the film having watched it at the cinema or on television.

1. Provide each group with an ***Ethel & Ernest* background** and a set of ***Ethel & Ernest* characters** and explain that they will be creating an animated scene using these materials and iMotion or Stop Motion Pro.
2. Provide learners with a large sheet of paper, pencils and pens and ask them to divide it into nine squares and plan a simple scene or sequence, to include their background and characters of their choice, just as a storyboard artist working on a film like *Ethel & Ernest* would plan a sequence.
3. Once learners have planned their narrative, stick the large sheets of paper to the wall near where they will be completing their animation, so that they can refer to it, much as an animator would refer to the storyboard as they work on the animation.

Provide students with iPads, open up iMotion or Stop Motion Pro and support students to animate an object like a water bottle, by moving it gradually across the table and capturing the stills, then playing it back to see the stills as an animation. This activity is to allow learners to experiment with the functionality of the app.

Top tips for using iMotion or Stop Motion Pro:

- Use a stand or tripod to keep the iPad stable
- Use the onion skin function to be able to see the previous position of the objects in the frame
- Ensure manual capture is selected
- Press capture 10 times at the start of the animation to create an establishing scene
- Press capture twice for each frame

4. Now discuss how learners will set up their background, props and characters to capture their animation. Discuss how two dimensional paper cut-outs can be designed to create the illusion of a three dimensional set.

For example:

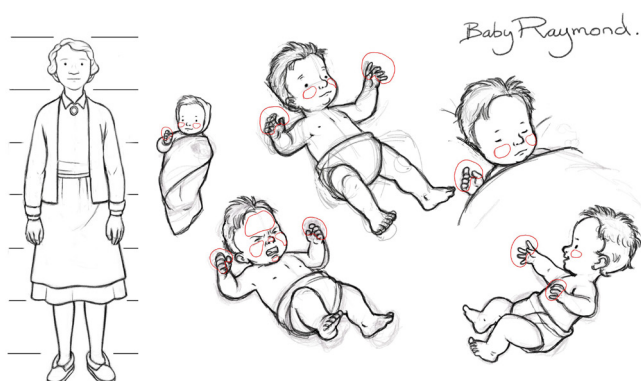
- Cut the characters at the knee and elbow joints to allow movement of the figures in the same way as real people move
- Create different heads and front and back views for the characters
- Create different size characters to create the illusion of moving into the distance or foreground
- Cover the eyes of the characters using a piece of paper and press capture once to create the illusion of blinking
- If characters are static, for example if they are talking or they are in the background, move them slightly for each frame to make them seem more alive. Do the same for any elements of the background that might move, like trees, smoke or flames

5. For more able learners provide several copies of the background and ask learners to use one as a base and cut out different elements on the additional copies to create a layered effect.

6. Support learners to use their storyboard to create their animated sequence.

7. Having completed the animation in iMotion or Stop Motion Pro, learners can save it to their camera roll and open it in iMovie to add titles, sound effects, narration or dialogue.

8. Screen the animations at an assembly or invite special guests to your class or club for learners to present what they have learnt about the book and/or the film and their interpretations of the story.



For more support to create animation, see the **Into Film** resource:

An Introduction to Stop Motion Animation
intofilm.org/resources/200

Resources available on
the *Ethel & Ernest* website
ethelandernestthemovie.com