

Animate It, Part 1: Frames, Onion Skinning and Playback

40 minutes

Following My Interests Online

Outcome 3.8

WHAT THIS LESSON DOES

Students draw a bouncing ball frame by frame in Wick Editor, use onion skinning to place each frame, and play it back. This lesson counts towards outcome 3.8: students use these editing skills to build their digital montage in the montage lessons that follow.

CURRICULUM OUTCOMES

Outcome	What the specification asks for
3.8	create a digital montage on a specific topic of interest from images sourced online while applying learning regarding copyright, fair use, plagiarism, and intellectual property ownership

WHAT STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO DO

- Explain what a frame, a frame rate and onion skinning are
- Draw a sequence of frames that reads as movement
- Use onion skinning to place each frame against the last
- Play an animation back and fix jumpy or dragging spacing

BEFORE THE BELL

- Wick Editor needs no account and shows no adverts. Go to wickeditor.com and click Launch Web Editor. That is the whole set-up, which is why it was chosen for this pair of lessons.
- Wick keeps nothing dependable once the tab closes. It may offer Load Autosave? on the same computer, but that copy came back empty when we tested it, so the lesson ends with save, which downloads a .wick file, and next lesson opens it with open. Say that at the start rather than at the end. On shared devices, make sure students can reach the file next time, in Downloads or on their school drive.
- Onion skinning is the idea that makes this lesson work. If a student is animating blind, drawing each frame with nothing faint behind it, check they have it switched on before they go any further.
- Around eight frames is enough for the movement to read on screen, so if someone is still perfecting frame one halfway through the period, move them on; they can refine later, but they cannot see a bounce until there is a sequence to play.
- Both hands-on steps carry an on-screen list of instructions that the students follow on their own devices. Project the same list at the front, call out the next control when the room is ready, and circulate to unstick anyone who has lost a panel or a button. Students work through the controls at their own pace rather than all together on the same click, so let the faster ones keep drawing while you help the rest.

WHAT YOU NEED

Item	Qty	Per	If you do not have it
Chromebook/Laptop/PC		student	
Wick Editor needs no account			Free, browser-based, no sign-up and no adverts. Work saves to the browser, not a server, so students must export before closing the tab.

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HOW THE LESSON RUNS

4 min	introduction	Start
4 min	content	Frames and frame rate
13 min	activity	Hands-on: Draw your first frames
13 min	activity	Hands-on: Onion skinning, then play it
4 min	content	Make sense
2 min	summary	What you covered

STEP BY STEP

4 min Start Devices with a browser. Wick Editor needs no account, but it keeps nothing once the tab closes.

A real flick-book beats any explanation. Make one on a sticky-note pad if you have nothing to hand.

Before anyone opens Wick, say that it keeps nothing once the tab closes. The last instruction in step 4 saves a .wick file, and that file is what they open next lesson.

4 min Frames and frame rate

Frame rate returns next lesson when they change it and see the effect.

13 min Hands-on: Draw your first frames

Squash on impact is the detail that makes it read as a bounce. Insist on it.

13 min Hands-on: Onion skinning, then play it

Onion skinning switches itself off while the animation plays and comes back when it stops, so nobody needs to turn it off. The mistake to watch for is the opposite one: drawing the rising frames with it off, so every frame is placed blind.

4 min Make sense

The answer they should reach: it would look mechanical. Real things slow at the top. That sets up the pendulum lesson.

2 min What you covered

The .wick file is what carries the work to next lesson. Anyone who leaves without one rebuilds four frames at the start of Part 2.