

Creating Your First Animation

45 minutes

Introduction to Animation

WHAT THIS LESSON DOES

In this lesson, you will create your first simple animation using Wick Editor. You will learn how to create a new project, add frames, and animate a drawn circle to bounce up and down.

WHAT STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO DO

- By the end of this lesson, students should be able to navigate and utilize the Wick Editor interface effectively.
- Students should be able to create a new animation project using the Wick Editor.
- Students will learn how to draw and add frames to their animation, using the drawing tools provided in the Wick Editor.
- Students should understand and be able to use the onion skinning technique to create smoother, more natural animations.
- Students should be able to preview, play, and adjust settings of their animation project.
- Students will learn how to save and export their animation project for later editing and sharing.

BEFORE THE LESSON

- Open and test <https://www.wickeditor.com/> on your own device first, and check the school filter does not block it. Click 'Editor' to confirm it launches.
- One device per pupil, or per pair if devices are short. A mouse or trackpad makes drawing far easier than a bare touchpad.
- Decide where pupils will save their .wick file and tell them the exact location, otherwise saved work scatters across devices.

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HOW THE LESSON RUNS

Introduction

Create a new project

Exploring the Interface

Drawing Your First Frame

Adding Frames to Your Animation

Using Onion Skinning

Using Layers

Drawing the frames to make the ball bounce

Previewing Your Animation

Playing your animation

Tweaking Your Animation Settings

Saving Your Work

Exporting Your Work

TEACHING MOVES

- 1. Introduction. Show them the end goal in one line: by the bell each pupil will have a circle that bounces. Keep the intro to under a minute and get devices open.
- 2. Create a new project. Have the site address on the board. Watch that everyone clicks 'Editor' and reaches a blank canvas before moving on, this is where stragglers appear.
- 3. Exploring the Interface. Point to three things only: the toolbar at the top, the inspector on the right, the timeline at the bottom. Name them once so later steps make sense.
- 4. Drawing Your First Frame. Tell them to draw the circle at the top of the canvas, not the middle, so there is room for it to fall. Reassure them a wobbly circle is fine.
- 5. Adding Frames to Your Animation. Show adding a frame both ways: clicking the empty timeline spot and right-clicking for 'Add Frame'. Compare a frame to a new page in a flipbook.
- 6. Using Onion Skinning. Turn onion skinning on yourself and let them see the faint previous frame appear. Explain it is a guide for placing the next circle, not part of the drawing.
- 7. Using Layers. Demonstrate the '+' above the timeline, then renaming the layer 'Ball' by double-clicking. Stress selecting the right layer before drawing so work lands in the correct place.
- 8. Drawing the frames to make the ball bounce. Model one frame: draw the next circle a little lower using the faint onion-skin outline. Then let them repeat the pattern down the canvas at their own pace.
- 9. Previewing Your Animation. Show dragging the red playhead to scrub through frames. Remind them to turn onion skinning off before checking how the movement really looks.
- 10. Playing your animation. Point out the green play triangle and the pause button beside it. Give a moment for everyone to watch their own bounce before troubleshooting jumpy ones.
- 11. Tweaking Your Animation Settings. Open the gear icon and change the frame rate live so they see smoother versus choppy. Have them name the project descriptively here.
- 12. Saving Your Work. Walk them through Save together, all naming the file 'MyBouncingBall.wick' and saving to the agreed location. Set the habit of saving regularly.
- 13. Exporting Your Work. Demonstrate exporting as an animated GIF so it plays outside the editor. Clarify that exporting shares a viewable copy while the .wick file is what they reopen to edit.

WHAT TO WATCH FOR

- Pupils draw the next frame on top of the last position instead of a little lower, so the ball never appears to move. Point to the faint onion-skin outline and ask 'where is the last circle, and where should this one go?' before they draw each frame.
- Pupils think Save and Export do the same thing, then cannot reopen their GIF to keep editing. State it plainly: the .wick file is the one you reopen to change your work, the GIF is only for showing people. Have them do both.
- Pupils draw on the wrong layer or with the wrong layer selected and their circle vanishes or overwrites the background. Show them how to check which layer is highlighted in the timeline before drawing, and how to select the 'Ball' layer again.

DIFFERENTIATION

- Emerging: Pre-set the brush size and colour so the pupil only has to click and drag to draw. Pair them with a partner who has the canvas open and can talk them through reaching the editor.
- Developing: Prompt them to use onion skinning to place each frame rather than guessing, then play it back to check the movement themselves.
- Proficient: Challenge them to add a second bounce, or make the ball squash slightly as it hits the bottom, then export and explain their frame rate choice back to you.