

Morphing Shape to Character

60 minutes

Introduction to Animation

WHAT THIS LESSON DOES

In this lesson, you'll learn to animate a shape transforming into a character using Wick Editor. Follow steps to create in-between frames, apply squash and stretch, and add anticipation for a smooth, lively animation.

WHAT STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO DO

- Understand the principles of animation through shape transformation.
- Apply in-between frames to create smooth transitions.
- Utilise squash and stretch techniques to add energy to animations.
- Demonstrate anticipation to build excitement in character morphing.
- Refine animations by previewing and adjusting timing and positioning.

BEFORE THE LESSON

- Open wickeditor.com yourself and click Editor to check it launches on the school network and is not filtered.
- One device per pupil, each able to run Wick Editor in a browser.
- Have a finished morph of your own ready to play, so pupils see where they are heading before they start.
- Confirm pupils can download files locally, since the lesson ends by exporting a GIF to the computer.

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HOW THE LESSON RUNS

Introduction

Open Wick Editor

Drawing Your First Frame

Drawing Your Character Target Frame

Adding In-between Frames

Add Anticipation Using Squash and Stretch

Preview and Refine

Have Fun!

Save and Exporting

TEACHING MOVES

- 1. Introduction. Play your own before-and-after morph first. Ask what changed and what stayed the same, so pupils picture the whole transformation before drawing anything.
- 3. Drawing Your First Frame. Push for simple. A circle or blob morphs cleanly, a detailed drawing does not. Tell pupils this shape only has to look good enough to change.
- 4. Drawing Your Character Target Frame. Stress keeping the character roughly the same size as the shape. Mismatched sizes make the morph lurch. Have them glance back at frame one before drawing.
- 5. Adding In-between Frames. Model dragging and shortening frames on the board slowly, once. This step is fiddly. Circulate and check everyone has two grey keyframes before moving on.
- 6. Add Anticipation Using Squash and Stretch. Demonstrate copy (C), paste (P) and squashing with the middle blue handle. Do it live once, then let pupils repeat it on their own frames.
- 7. Preview and Refine. Get everyone pressing play early and often. Ask: does it feel jerky? If yes, add more in-between frames rather than restarting.
- 9. Save and Exporting. Show the Export then Export GIF path. Have pupils rename with the lesson name and their own name before downloading, so files are findable later.

WHAT TO WATCH FOR

- Pupils think Wick Editor draws the in-between frames automatically, so the shape should morph on its own once the two ends exist. Show that the empty frames are blank and must be filled by hand. Explain the animator makes each stage of the change themselves.
- Pupils make the character much bigger or more detailed than the starting shape, so the transition jumps rather than flows. Play a jerky example beside a smooth one. Ask them to match sizes and simplify the character until the change looks steady.
- Pupils confuse exporting with saving and lose their work, or export before finishing. Explain that Export GIF creates the finished animation to download. Have them preview and refine fully before exporting, and name the file clearly.

DIFFERENTIATION

- Emerging: Pair them with a partner for the frame-dragging in step 5, the fiddliest part, so they are not stuck on it alone. Let them keep both shapes very simple, a circle to a smiley face, so the focus stays on the morphing steps not the drawing.
- Developing: Ask them to talk you through where each keyframe sits and why, to check they understand what the in-between frames are doing. Prompt them to add one squash or stretch and preview it, then decide themselves whether it helped.
- Proficient: Challenge them to add a second morph, so the shape becomes one character and then changes again. Have them add colour and extra in-between frames to make the transition as smooth as they can, then explain their timing choices.