



IMAGINING ACTION

Cartoons are the most familiar kind of animation, but an animator is not limited to drawn images. Paper, sand, glass, pins, clay models and puppets are some of the materials animators have used to make films. Just about anything that can be shifted, scattered, cut, rotated or molded can be animated. Silhouette, collage and other forms of two-dimensional animations are lighted from below or above for different results. Animators of three-dimensional models and puppets use a stop-motion camera, which may expose just one frame for each change in posi-

tion. Pixilation and time-lapse photography speed up passing time for a comical or surreal effect. Materials for animated films are limited only by your imagination.

All animated films, however, start with a storyboard, which looks something like a comic strip. A storyboard is essentially a visual outline of a film. It helps the animator plan the film's action and indicates color schemes, style, framing and sometimes dialogue as well. Using the storyboard, animators can discover any potential problems before they begin to create the film.

Choose a comic strip from the Sunday newspaper, or a short scene from a graphic novel or a comic book. Study the use of color, the different sizes of the images and the way the visuals advance the story.

What happens in the scene?

Describe the way the artist creates a sense of movement.

What techniques does the artist use to develop mood and emotion?

Now, invent a simple story of your own. Identify its key moments. On a separate piece of paper, note the moments with a rough sketch and a caption or phrase. Then arrange the key moments in order in boxes like those in **Activity Two**.

Title of film _____

What happens in the sequence? _____

Are the characters humans, animals, appliances, kids, adults? How will this influence the story?

Which frames are in close-up and which ones are seen from a distance?

Why?

Indicate them on your storyboard.

How does the action flow from one key moment to another?

Is the information clearly presented?

Where does the story take place?

Do your backgrounds make that clear?

Who is the most important character in the sequence? How does a viewer know that?

STORYBOARD TERMS

KEY MOMENT: The major points of a sequence, both of action and story development.

STORYBOARD: Small drawings and captions arranged in chronological order that show the action of the film step by step and help the animator plan the film's structure.