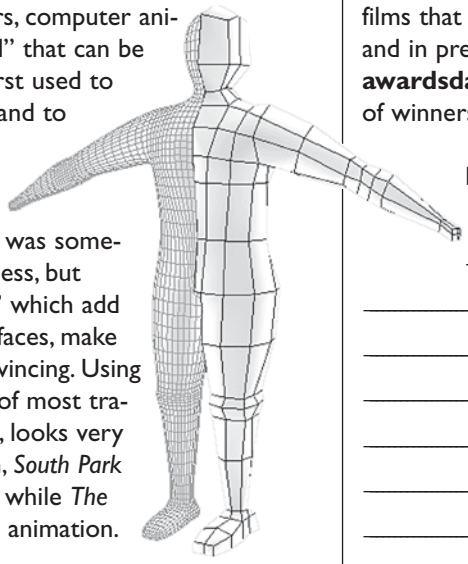
ACTIVITY 4

REPRODUCIBLE MASTER

LEARNING *from the* BEST

Instead of pen and ink, animators working with Computer Generated Images (CGI) use a mouse, mathematical formulas and computer hardware and software. Rather than sketching out characters and objects like traditional animators, computer animators build a three-dimensional "model" that can be viewed from different angles. CGI was first used to create special effects in live-action films and to make short animated films, cartoons and commercials. *Toy Story* (1995) was the first full-length, totally computer-animated film. Early computer animation was sometimes criticized for looking crude or lifeless, but technical advances such as "bump maps," which add real-looking irregularities to smooth surfaces, make contemporary CGI animation more convincing. Using CGI, animators can reproduce the look of most traditional animation. *Toy Story*, for example, looks very similar to stop-motion puppet animation, *South Park* uses software to simulate paper cutouts while *The Lion King* combines CGI and hand-drawn animation.



Computer-Generated Image Model

COMPUTER ANIMATION TERMS

BUMP MAPS: Computer software that adds realistic texture to an animated object by creating small, light-reflecting bumps on its surface.

COMPUTER GENERATED IMAGERY (CGI): Screen images that are animated using mathematical formulas and computers.

MODEL: A three-dimensional virtual character created on the computer, which can be viewed from various angles.

PART A. View the sequences your teacher has chosen.

Titles of films

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What differences do you notice between traditional animation and CGI animation?

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Which do you prefer and why? _____

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Why might animators choose to use traditional methods and materials if they are able to get similar results using CGI?

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PART B. In the previous activities, we learned that the animator's job is to create rather than record the illusion of movement. Now it's time to look at the films that were nominated for animation this year and in previous years. Go to **www.oscars.org/awardsdatabase/index.html** to find a complete list of winners and nominees.

List the 2003 nominees for Best Animated Feature Film and Best Animated Short Films

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Pick one film that you would like to see from the list of nominated films or another film that was recognized for achievement in animation in a previous year. As you watch the film, consider some of the guidelines that the members of the Academy follow when making their award selections.

- Is the storytelling clear and focused?
- Are the characters well-developed and believable?
- Is the animation well-executed?
- Does the animation style enhance the story?
- Is the pacing smooth?

After viewing the film, and on the back of this sheet, describe why you think the film won the award or was nominated. Put yourself in the shoes of an Academy member. Using what you know about each of this year's nominated films—either from seeing them or reading about them—predict how the professional filmmakers in the Academy will vote.

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