

# Storyboarding: Examining Focal Points in History

Lesson 1 p 3

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Lesson 2 p 4

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Lesson 3 p 5

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Lesson 4 p 6

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## UNIT INTRODUCTION

In this unit, students learn about story structure and its use in animated films and television. Students learn to visually depict original stories through the creation of storyboards.

Social Studies concepts and historical events are used as inspiration for storyboards.

## SUBJECT AREAS

Media  
Arts

Social  
Studies

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## Social Studies / Unit 3

### Unit Objectives

Students will be able to determine main events in historical documents and in animated stories.

Students will be able to use intentional compositional structures and visual elements to represent key moments from stories in a storyboard.

### Standards

#### MEDIA ARTS

**Anchor Standard #2** Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

**Anchor Standard #3b** Refine and complete artistic work.

**Anchor Standard #7** Perceive and analyze artistic work.

#### SOCIAL STUDIES

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.3** Identify key steps in a text's description of a process related to history/social studies (e.g., how a bill becomes law, how interest rates are raised or lowered).

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.3** Analyze in detail a series of events described in a text; determine whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.3** Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.5** Describe how a text presents information (e.g., sequentially, comparatively, causally).

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.5** Analyze how a text uses structure to emphasize key points or advance an explanation or analysis.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.5** Analyze in detail how a complex primary source is structured, including how key sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text contribute to the whole.

### Vocabulary

Three-Act Structure  
The Set-up  
The Confrontation  
The Resolution  
Story Beats  
Storyboard

### **INTRODUCTION**

Most comics, cartoons, sitcoms, and movies follow what is called a 3-Act Structure. Following this format, stories begin in Act 1, the set-up. This is where characters, the setting, and conflict are introduced to the audience. Act 2, the confrontation, is the longest section of the story and follows the characters as they encounter setbacks and embark on solving their problems. Finally, Act 3, the resolution, brings the conflict to a head which eventually resolves the characters' problems.

This lesson will ask students to dissect stories into their distinct parts to determine the critical parts of the story which will eventually be represented in a storyboard.

### **ACTIVATION**

Ask students to consider their knowledge of animation and/or past learning in media arts:

- What is the difference between animated and live-action movies/television shows?
- How can you organize images?
- How do images tell stories?

### **DEMONSTRATION**

Teacher introduces an animation clip, pausing periodically to take notes on the board about the action taking place. Teacher creates a list of the clip's main points, or Story Beats, explaining why each represents critical moments in the story.

Next, read a short history/social studies passage to the whole class. While reading, come up with a list on the board of the key events from the passage. After list is complete, go through each item to determine how or why that event occurred.

### **APPLICATION**

Students are shown a different animation clip and instructed to come up with its story beats. After working independently, have students pair up and discuss their beats and come to a consensus on the four they would like to put forward to the class. Ask groups to share their beats, creating a comprehensive list on the board. For each beat, ask a student to share why it was important to include in their list. While there may be different ideas for which four beats to choose, it is important that students understand that their choices impact the way their story is told and received.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Teacher reviews story beats chosen during the last class. Teacher introduces the new concept of a storyboard with students, showing students examples from storyboards from movies or television shows.

Storyboards are the first step in the animation process. Storyboards are hand-drawn images that bring the story to life for the very first time.

Since storyboards communicate are the first step in the animation process and because they are so simple, it is important that they are intentional and contain all of the necessary visual information needed to tell each part of the story.

Teacher will select Beat 2 from previous lesson and create a list on the board of all of the objects that will need to be included in that cell of the storyboard. Next, the teacher will brainstorm and compile a list of visual attributes that will best communicate that part of the story. Finally, the teacher will sketch the storyboard cell.

### **APPLICATION**

Students will then be assigned Beat 3 from the previous lesson and will create lists of both the objects and visual attributes needed to communicate that scene. Next, students will each create a sketch of the scene, incorporating all of the items from their list.

After students have completed their sketches, they will participate in a gallery walk to see how their peers have chosen to depict the same scene. Students will be placed in pairs or small groups to discuss the effective aspects of their scene and the ones that could be improved. Students should not focus on drawing ability, but rather how the makeup and visual elements of the scene are used to clearly or unclearly capture that part of the story.

After these discussions, students will revise or redo their sketches to make sure their drawings tell the story as effectively as possible.

### DEMONSTRATION

Teacher reminds students of the main points that were drawn during the previous class. Teacher chooses one main point and draws it in 3 different ways: close-up, mid-shot, and wide-shot. Students follow along as teacher is drawing.

Have students discuss the structure of these different compositions.

- Ask: How does having a close-up create a focal point?

Read a short passage from a history/social studies text.

- Ask: How do writers create their own focal points through structural choices?

### APPLICATION

Choosing one of their drawings from the previous class, students create 3 variations: a close-up, a mid-shot, and a wide-shot. For each, have students measure their characters and the rest of the cell to create ratios, write equations, or calculate surface area and volume.

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## Social Studies / Unit 3

### Lesson 4

1  
hr

#### **APPLICATION**

Introduce final project and its requirements to students:

Create a storyboard that communicates an original story, including its plot, characters, and setting. Storyboard must:

- Have at least 4 cells
- Follow a 3-Act Structure
- Use at least 2 different compositional layouts

Students will create these storyboards on paper or using an online drawing program like Adobe Spark, Google Drawing, or Sketchpad.

#### **INTEGRATION**

Show students 5-step animation process video. Instruct students to answer the following prompts:

- How was learning from other media arts disciplines helpful in the creation of storyboarding?
- How would learning from this unit be helpful in the creation of a live-action film?