

**Unit 1: Motion Graphics & Animation**  
**Principles of Animation**  
15 Classes

*Rev. May 2025*

**Essential Questions**

- How do the 12 Principles of Animation help bring characters and actions to life in a believable way?
- In what ways can animators use the 12 Principles to communicate ideas, emotions, and personality through movement?

**Enduring Understandings with Unit Goals**

**EU 1:** Effective animation relies on foundational principles that create the illusion of life, helping characters and motion feel natural, engaging, and believable to the viewer.

- Students will identify and define the 12 Principles of Animation.
- Students will analyze how each principle contributes to realistic and appealing animation.
- Students will apply at least three animation principles in original projects to enhance motion and character design.

**EU 2:** Animation is a form of visual storytelling in which movement, guided by the 12 Principles, conveys emotion, intention, and personality without the need for words.

- Students will evaluate how motion and timing can express emotion and character traits.
- Students will experiment with exaggeration, timing, and anticipation to create expressive animation sequences.
- Students will produce a short animated scene that demonstrates personality and storytelling using the animation principles.

**Standards**

**National Media Arts Standards:**

- MA:Cr1.1.6: Formulate variations of goals and solutions for media artworks by practicing chosen creative processes, such as sketching, improvising and brainstorming.
- MA:Cr2.1.6: Organize, propose, and evaluate artistic ideas, plans, prototypes, and production processes for media arts productions, considering purposeful intent.
- MA:Cr3.1.6b. Appraise how elements and components can be altered for intentional effects and audience, and refine media artworks to reflect purpose and audience.

- MA:Pr5.1.6c: Demonstrate adaptability using tools and techniques in standard and experimental ways in constructing media artworks.
- MA:Pr6.1.6: a. Analyze various presentation formats and fulfill various tasks and defined processes in the presentation and/or distribution of media artworks.
- b. Analyze results of and improvements for presenting media artworks.
- MA:Re7.1.6: a. Identify, describe, and analyze how message and meaning are created by components in media artworks.
- b. Identify, describe, and analyze how various forms, methods, and styles in media artworks manage audience experience.
- MA:Re8.1.6: Analyze the intent of a variety of media artworks, using given criteria.
- MA:Re9.1.6: Determine and apply specific criteria to evaluate various media artworks and production processes, considering context and practicing constructive feedback.
- MA:Cn10.1.6: a. Access, evaluate, and use internal and external resources to create media artworks, such as knowledge, experiences, interests, and research.

### ISAAC Vision of the Graduate Competencies

**Competency 1:** Write effectively for a variety of purposes.

**Competency 2:** Speak to diverse audiences in an accountable manner.

**Competency 3:** Develop the behaviors needed to interact and contribute with others on a team.

**Competency 4:** Analyze and solve problems independently and collaboratively.

**Competency 5:** Be responsible, creative, and empathetic members of the community.

### Unit Content Overview

### Daily Learning Objectives with *TWPS*

### Students will be able to...

- Describe the purpose of the 12 Principles of Animation and identify how they are used in professional animation.
  - *Why do some animations feel more “alive” and believable than others?*
- Demonstrate squash and stretch to emphasize weight, flexibility, and motion in a simple object or character.
  - *What happens when you drop a water balloon versus a rock? How would that look animated?*
- Apply anticipation to prepare the viewer for an action and improve timing and storytelling in animation.
  - *Have you ever noticed a character “wind up” before jumping or throwing? Why do animators do that?*
- Use staging techniques to clearly communicate action, emotion, or intent in a scene.
  - *How do movies or animations guide your eyes to focus on the most important part of the scene?*
- Compare and apply straight ahead and pose-to-pose animation methods to create dynamic movement.
  - *Would you rather plan everything out before starting a project or improvise as you go? Which approach works better in animation?*
- Animate follow through and overlapping action to create realistic motion that continues after the main movement ends.
  - *When someone with long hair runs and suddenly stops, what happens to their hair? How would you animate that?*
- Apply slow in and slow out to show acceleration and deceleration in movement for more natural timing.
  - *What feels more natural: a car that speeds up smoothly or instantly jumps to full speed? Why?*
- Animate natural arcs of motion to enhance realism in character and object movement.
  - *Try throwing a ball—does it move in a straight line or an arc? Why is this important in animation?*
- Add secondary actions to enhance the main movement and give characters more depth and realism.
  - *What small movements do people make while talking or walking that help show their mood or personality?*
- Use timing to control the speed of movement and influence the emotion and clarity of animation.
  - *How does fast vs. slow movement change how we feel about a scene or action?*
- Use exaggeration to make actions more expressive, readable, and entertaining in animation.
  - *Why might an animator make a jump way higher or a face way more dramatic than in real life?*
- Apply the principles of solid drawing and visual appeal to create characters and poses that are clear, engaging, and believable.

- *What makes a character design or drawing instantly appealing or likable—even before it moves?*
- Plan and storyboard a short animation that demonstrates at least 4 of the 12 Principles of Animation.
  - *If you could animate any short moment or action, what would it be? How can you make it fun and believable.*
- Create a short animation that applies multiple animation principles to express movement and personality.
  - *Which animation principles are you focusing on in your scene? How are you using them to make your animation more expressive or believable.*
- Reflect on and present their animation, explaining how they used animation principles to enhance storytelling and motion.
  - *If someone watched your animation without any words, what would they understand about the scene?*

### **Instructional Strategies/Differentiated Instruction**

- Daily Warm Up Activities
- Lecture slides with guided note-taking
- Flexible grouping
- Exit slips
- Graphic Organizers
- Creating authentic connections for students
- Rephrasing and restatement of information and concepts
- Student use of headphones
- Independent reading
- Outlining of text

### **Assessments**

#### **FORMATIVE ASSESSMENTS:**

- Do Now
- Animation Activities
- Student discussions and responses
- Accountable Talk Discussions
- Completed notes
- Completed graphic organizers

#### **SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENTS:**

Unit Task: "Bring It to Life: A Short Narrative Animation"

### Unit Task

**Unit Task Title:** "Bring It to Life: A Short Narrative Animation"

**Task Description:** In this culminating project, students will create a short hand-drawn animation (5–10 seconds) that tells a simple story or moment without using dialogue. The animation must demonstrate at least four of the 12 Principles of Animation, such as squash and stretch, anticipation, or exaggeration. Students will plan their animation using a storyboard, then bring their narrative to life using frame-by-frame animation techniques. The final product should clearly express emotion, motion, and personality through movement alone.

### Unit Resources

Adobe Animate  
Animation Desk