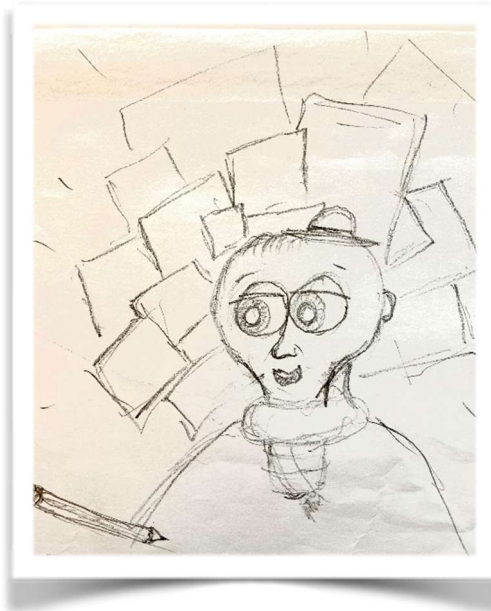


Stop Motion Animation Workshop 1 Writing a Story

**What you need:
Something to write or draw with.**



**Something to write or draw on.
Paper / Pad / Sketch Book / Tablet
Your imagination!**



**What you end up with:
A Short Story for a stop motion animation!**

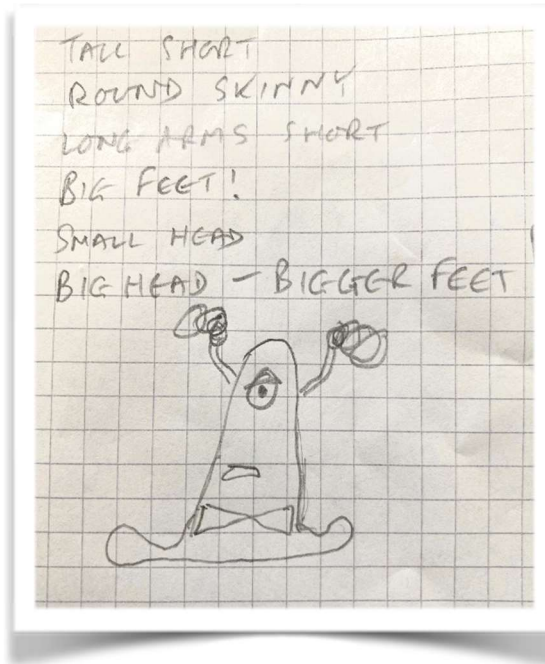
There are no rules!

You may already have an idea you've been brewing in your noggin.

Write your ideas down in note form to start with.

Don't stress about fitting into a structure or be worried that you aren't starting at the beginning.

If you want to start by drawing a character – do that.



Or if you want to start by detailing a specific scene then go ahead.

– It will all come together in the end!

Another good tip to help with this stage is to carry a notebook or sketch book with you so that you can catch those random little thoughts. Get into the habit of recording these little nuggets, they may flesh out into a fully-fledged story eventually.

Don't be afraid of your imagination or your ideas.

They maybe will be weird and may not work initially.

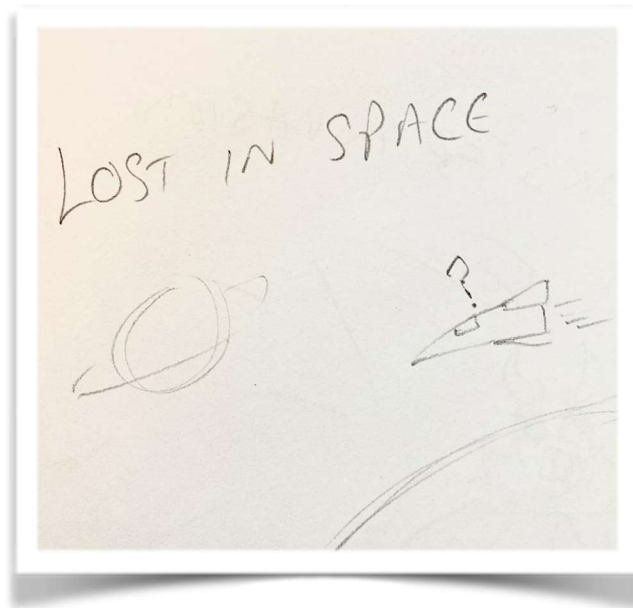
Don't be afraid of making mistakes because they aren't really mistakes, what they are is an essential part of your learning journey – mistakes are good because you learn from them but they may actually turn out to be really good ideas and not be mistakes at all.

Think of this as like training for a marathon – we can't all be elite runners, but we can certainly train ourselves to take part.

Think of this as marathon training for your imagination.

Having an overall theme sometimes helps with writing a story and the theme you could adopt for your animations as part of this Animex Academy workshop is...

LOST IN SPACE!



In the animation industry stories tend to be constructed in 5 or 6 key parts.

What all successful stories have is a main character or a bunch of characters and they have to do something to overcome something, or there is a journey to find something.

A conflict or a problem to overcome.

In the end we solve the problem or end the conflict and the main character/s learn something along the way, very often they learn something about themselves.

So let's get to it and write that story...

Step 1: Introduce Your Characters

CHALLENGE 1 (5 minutes)

Think of some characters.

Remember the theme is lost in space.

Who is lost in space?

Is it you? Is it a human or an animal or is it an alien?

Try not to have too many characters because you have to make them, stick to 1, 2 or 3 or maybe 1 for everyone in your group.

Give the characters a name.

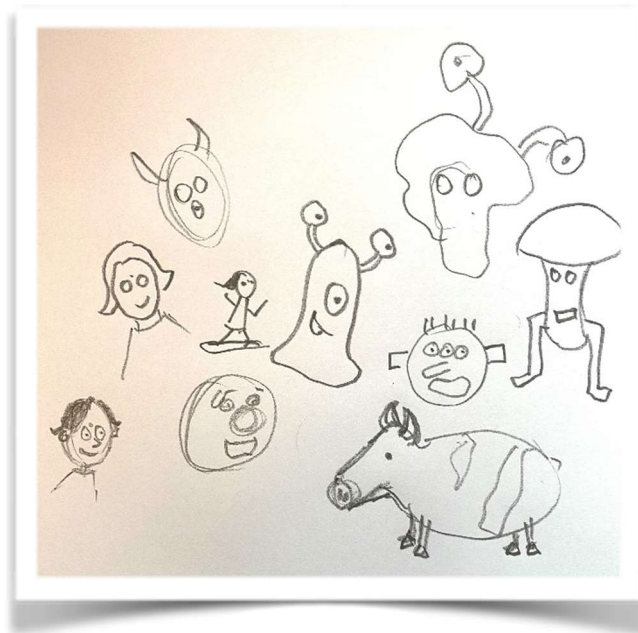
Give them a brief description – what do they look like?

Examples

Serina the famous rocket builder's daughter

Bleepo the green alien with antennas

Daisy the spotted cow



Step 2: Where Does It Take Place?

CHALLENGE 2 (10 minutes)

Think of some locations.

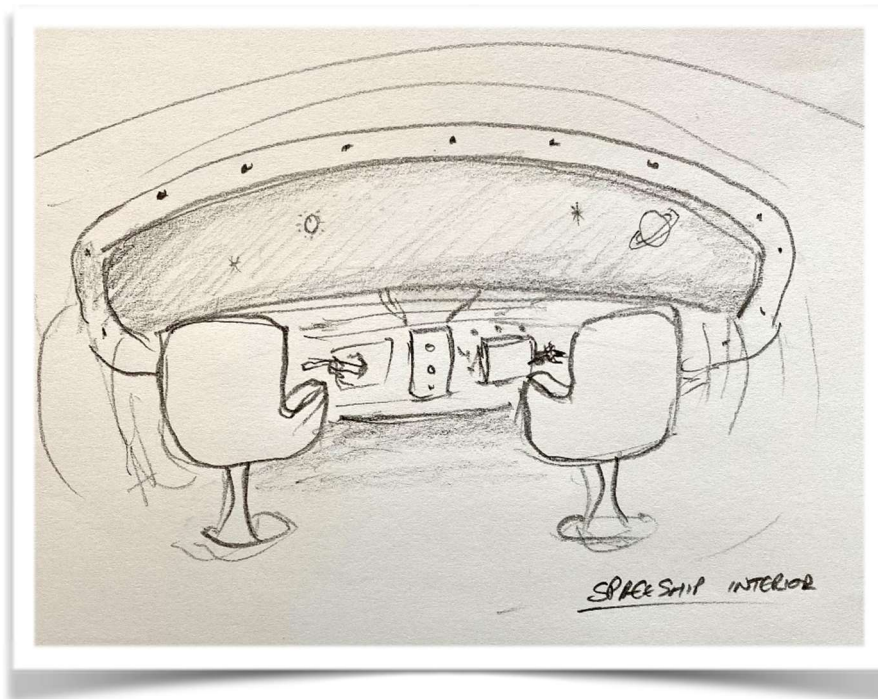
Where does your story take place?

Space?
Home Planet?
Alien planet?
Farm?

Give each location a short description – think about what you would see there, that tells an audience where it is.

Space has stars and planets and moons, asteroids and comets.
An alien planet has overgrown mushrooms and purple trees. A farm has a barn and a tractor.

You could also do a very quick sketch.



Try not to have too many locations - you have to make them all remember!

Step 3: What Is The Problem or Conflict?

CHALLENGE 3 (15 minutes)

As you've been coming up with your characters and locations you may have thought of this already.

So it may not be a huge challenge.

BUT this does give you the chance to add details to the problem your character/s are facing.

The big issue is they are lost in space but is that the main problem?

Maybe they need to find someone to help?

Or they need to find something important to help them get back home?

Very often the main character may try something and then fail or...

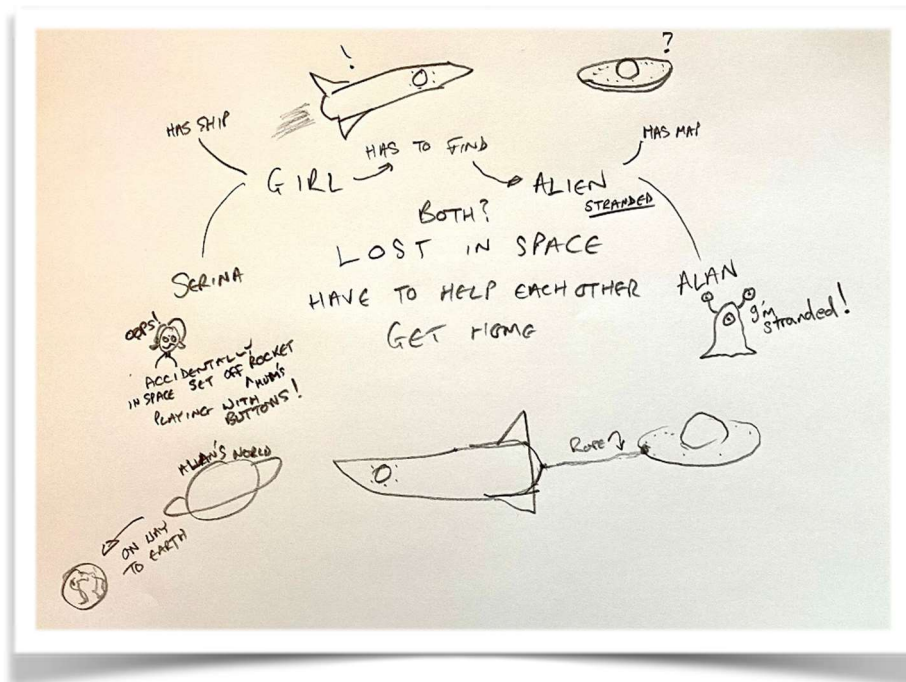
They may succeed but it causes harm to something or someone around them that they didn't see – or some unforeseen consequences that aren't ideal.

That could be because they haven't thought it through properly or they lack something essential.

This is known in animation & story-writing circles as the low-point for your characters.

The challenge is to describe what the problem is.

This time you have 15 minutes because we want to see some detail.



Step 4: Solve the Problem or Conflict

CHALLENGE 4 (15 minutes)

Known in the animation world as process.

This is where our character does the thing they are supposed to do to achieve their goals.

They might need to make a huge sacrifice to do it like giving up a cherished thing to unlock a door to get home.

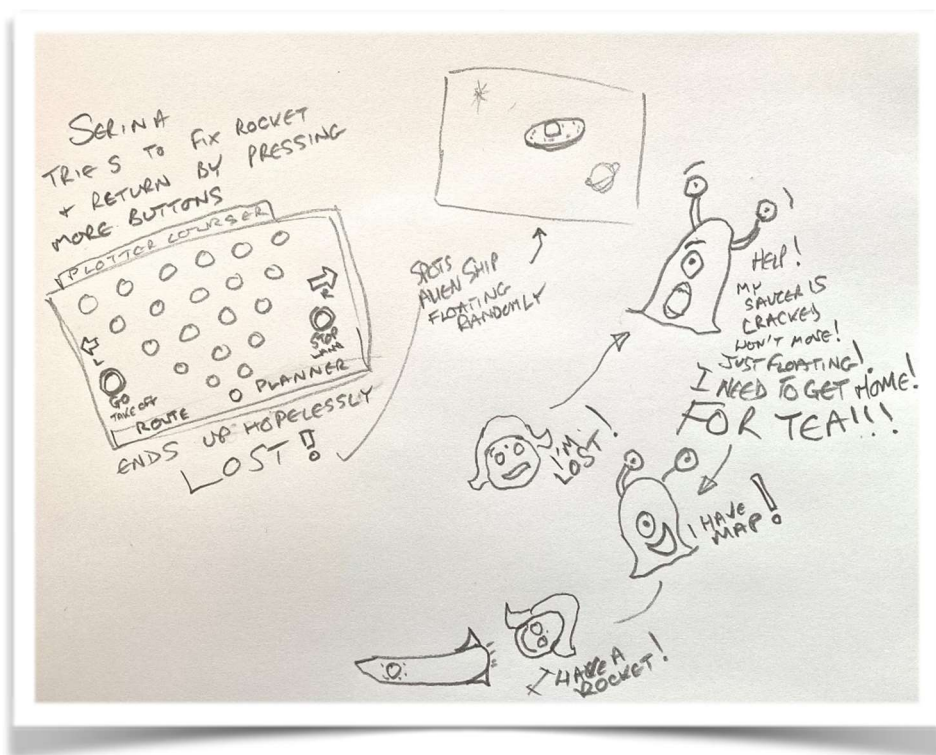
Like Frodo Baggins giving up the magic ring in Lord of The Rings.

It might be finding the thing they need after a perilous journey.

Or finding the right person or alien thing that will help them.

In this challenge you could tell us about their journey.

Describe how they solve their problem.



Step 5: The Conclusion...

CHALLENGE 5 (10 minutes)

And that challenge is to conclude your story.

What happens here is usually the final conflict or problem is overcome.

A baddie is defeated.

They get home.

The characters come to learn something about themselves.

The characters may suddenly realise something important about being at home or having friends about them.

They come to an understanding about the reasons for their problem in the first place.

Serena who accidentally launched herself into space, learns that that it pays to listen to her Mother and not show off that she pretends to know what she's doing.

Think about how they win.

What happens when they win?

Who learns?

The challenge is: write an ending.



Now you should have a complete story ready for the next Animex Academy Workshop where you get to design and create your characters and their locations!

Written and prepared for Animex Academy by Robin Webb © 2021 Teesside University