

# How to tell a stop-motion story

Here some useful tips on how to tell a story using the stop-motion technique:

## The idea

The first step is to think about the story you want to tell. In this case we give you a little help and ask you to focus your attention on the theme of ecology, the environment, or more simply to tell us about your relationship with nature: plants, animals or insects...

An example could be the story of a plant: from the seed, to the flowering to the fruits; or that of a bee and its long journey to find the best nectar to produce honey; or the story of a fisherman who becomes friends with a turtle and decides to save the other fishes from the pollution of the sea. Or even the story of one of the many objects you use in your daily life and that are reduced to garbage – but instead could have a new life!

There are many ways to tell a story: it could be a real story that happened to you or a friend of yours, or a fantasy story that you just invented. It could be a fairy tale that you read in a book and that you would like to bring to life in your animated short film, or if you like to sing and play an instrument you could tell a story as if it were a music video.

So, in this first stage you don't have to worry about technical equipment or creating characters or sets – first of all, a tale told in stop-motion images must have a story and a message. Before starting the production of a film, you just need a sheet of paper, a pencil and a good amount of imagination.

And remember, it doesn't have to be a long story, 2 or 3 minutes of video is more than enough, you only need a simple but effective idea!

## The writing

Now that the idea is taking shape, it's time to put it on paper.

These are some important questions to start writing your story: what do I want to communicate? Who is the protagonist of my story? What happens to my character? What dialogue will there be? What is the beginning and what is the end?

Once you've written your draft, also called a screenplay, it may be very useful to translate it into a visual story, with images, and then move on to the creation of your storyboard. The storyboard is the transcription in images and drawings of the most important scenes that will make up your story, also including some indications about the shots.

The framing, which is the space you choose to capture in a photograph, is also crucial to convey your message. You may choose to have a long shot in which the character of the story is immersed in the landscape, or you may choose to take a close-up of the story's protagonist to present him and illustrate his expression. Finally, you may decide to photograph a detail such as the eyes, mouth or an important object in the scene.

When making the storyboard it is important to keep the narrative very simple. Imagine that every little movement will have to be photographed. To make a complete story in stop-motion we will need a lot of photos, so it is not necessary to tell every single event, some parts can be left to the imagination. As in the example of the video by Claude Barras, if we want to tell the story of the grandmother who goes on holiday it will be enough to make a detail of the suitcase, a close-up of the grandmother's smiling face, and a long shot where a train travels fast towards the sea.

Have fun!



Locarno Kids

HomeMade Movies