

LEGO Stop-Motion Animation using LEGO Movie Maker app for iPad

These notes are adapted from an online article: How to Make a Stop Motion Video With Your Kids: LEGO Style by Melody Lopez (<http://mykidsadventure.com/stop-motion-video/>) which is pinned on my LEGO Pinterest page (Debbie Sternklar).

Supplies:

- Story ideas (paper & pencil to jot down a plan)
- iPad with LEGO Movie Maker downloaded (make sure that your iPad is set to allow the app to access the camera and microphone, if you generally have those restricted)
- Stable base to hold the iPad, like a library book stand
- LEGO baseplates, bricks, and minifigs
- Plain backdrop, even white poster board so the background won't be distracting

Stop-motion moviemaking tips:

- Remind the students that every story has a beginning, middle and end, no matter how short the story. Have them choose their characters and jot down ideas for the beginning, middle and end of their movie, they can work in twos, threes or fours.
- Once they have a solid idea, they can work together to build their sets (and draw backgrounds if you have time and paper).
- Choose a filming location away from other builders who might jostle the table (sometimes the floor is best, facing a wall – as long as it's well-lit).
- Set up the iPad on the stand close enough so that you can see the whole set up close.
- Simple stories with only a few characters are best.
- Making small movements in the scene will look the smoothest in your movie.
- Be consistent with your props and people – nothing should disappear for a few frames, then reappear (unless you're doing a magic trick!)
- Keep the camera in one place. If you need to change the point of view, move the camera gradually between photos, this is stop-motion, not videography.
- When working in a group, filming goes most smoothly when one student taps the screen to take the photo, and the others move characters and props. If they accidentally get a photo with someone's hand in it, they can just take another photo of the same scene, then edit out the bad one later.
- Communicate and cooperate with your fellow filmmakers!
- After you have all of your photos, preview your film and watch for mistakes that need to be deleted or re-shot.

Editing in LEGO Movie Maker app:

In this app you can edit two different ways: change the film speed, apply music and filters to the whole film OR edit one frame to add a unique sound or dialogue, or add a sticker and place it where you like it:

Film editing: try different speeds - but if you keep it slower, you will be able to see all of the details that you planned.

- Delete any bad photos. Add a frame if needed
- Pick background music that fits with your scene.
- Check out the special effects and add a filter if you like one.

Frame Editing: If you'd like a unique sound effect, with one frame, find the frame, then click EDIT on that photo to see more options. This is where you'll be able to add your own sound and set how long it should play. When you are editing a single frame, you can also add a sticker and place it where you'd like it. If you choose "Add Frame" you can add a frame from your camera roll, or pick a frame from the LEGO Library, check them out.

- Preview your film again. Change your title if needed.
- Once everyone is happy, save your film. (If you are short on time, save all of the films at the end of the program so the iPad won't be tied up too long).

General

When running your program, have the next group setting up their opening scene nearby, ready to start filming when it is their turn with the iPad.

If you are short of time, tell every group that their stories can only be 10 (12, 15, whatever) frames this time, while they are all learning.

After the program, share the films on your library's YouTube! Or show them at the next LEGO program.