

# Nicole Emmons | Session 3:

## Let's Animate!: Pre-Production

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**List of Required Supplies:** Phone, masking tape, clear tape if desired, table, modeling clay, poster board or other paper to create background, Notebook, pen/ pencil (You can also use toys or objects to animate with.) Roll of paper or material for background. Modeling clay, wax paper. Tools for sculpting- can be eating utensils, things from the kitchen. Floral wire, or pipe cleaners, ruler, scissors for pipe cleaners, wire cutters if you use floral wire.

**Space/Facility Requirements:** floor space (or if you have a phone attachment that will connect phone to tripod/ tripod then table space) at least 3 feet square of space.

**Student Time Required:** 60 - 120 minutes

**Additional Links:**

[www.stopmotionanimation.com](http://www.stopmotionanimation.com)

**Today:**

1. create character/ s
2. create backgrounds
3. create set pieces/ props

### Instructions

Today we are going to think about characters, sets and props. Now that you have your story, let's think about how you will visually represent it.

For the main character, you can use a toy you already have, or you can make a character using clay, or you can make one using wire and covering it with material. For this class we will not have time to go into detailed stop motion puppet building, but as you progress with your animating there are many websites devoted to stop motion that you can visit to continue your learning, such as the one above which is an insider site used by professionals and students since 1999.

In our animation test we tried down shooting. For our film let's shoot towards the wall. In order to not see the gap between the table and the wall, you can use material or paper that you can tape to the wall and also tape to the table. If you have permission, you can also use thumbtacks to tack your background paper to the wall. Make sure everything is covered all the way past the edges of the frame by looking in the camera.

You can add set pieces or painted backgrounds to establish location.

You can make props or use toys or objects that you have. Make sure you **"lock them down"** with tape so that they don't move around when you are animating!

When you work with modeling clay, put wax paper down or make sure the surface is clean. **Red clay and some of the brighter clays can stain.** They can also stain your hands- this will wash off, but if you touch red clay and then touch a lighter colored clay the stain will transfer to the lighter colors. Have wet hand towels handy to wash in between.

Work/ smooch the clay with your hands to get it to soften. Keep the characters on the small side, about 3" tall and about 2" wide. You can change these proportions for animal or fantastical characters. Try to make most of the character out of one or 2 pieces of clay, and Keep the design simple.

It is a good idea to make 2 identical versions of the same character in case one of them breaks. You can also create an armature out of floral wire (or pipe cleaners), to use as a base for your clay. (This is more advanced, but if you want to learn more go to the website listed above and search for "armatures".) If you find the clay is breaking apart too much when you animate, keep spare clay of the same color close by for repairs. Keep in mind, most of the stop motion characters you see on TV and movies are actually made from molds and have very sophisticated, and expensive, armatures inside them. You are just beginning, and can work up to that!

**At the end of Day 3, you should have:**

- Character (s)
- Background (s)
- Props (as many as you like! But don't forget, more objects to animate= more complicated shot.)

If you are not done with any of these by the end of the session, keep going throughout the week.