

Introduction

Geography lends itself brilliantly to the use of stop motion animation. From plate tectonics to glaciation there are many processes for the student to master, and being able to visualise them with animation will make it so much easier.

So let's look at a couple of ways you can use Smooovie to really help your students get to grips with geography:

Idea 1 - Animating the Water Cycle

Stop motion animation is a great way for younger students to get to know the Water Cycle. With the magic of animation they can follow an individual drop of water on its continuous journey and have lots of fun showing how it falls as precipitation, infiltrates the ground then joins lots of other water drops in rivers, lakes and the sea before rising back into the sky via evaporation and transpiration. This project can be done in groups or as a class.

1. Discuss the Water Cycle with the class. Review the main processes involved in the order they are occurring. Get the children to think carefully about how they might portray the Water Cycle. Some might prefer a general overview of the Water Cycle, whilst others might prefer to follow an individual water droplet on its journey. If the latter then they must think what the water droplet will look like in its different forms at the various stages of the Cycle e.g. as water, ice and vapour. How will they portray the water droplet joining closely with others to form rivers and streams, or moving further away from other droplets during evaporation?
2. Ask the children to create a storyboard, either in groups or as a class, representing the shots which they will need to portray the Water Cycle. This will help them to keep track of their animation once they get started.
3. Create a range of props to use to portray the Water Cycle, keeping in mind the practicality of working with these props during the animation process.
4. Get animating! The children will probably take more than one lesson to make their animations so make sure that you have a safe place to store the sets and props when not in use :)
5. Watch the animations as a class and discuss.



Idea 2 - River Features

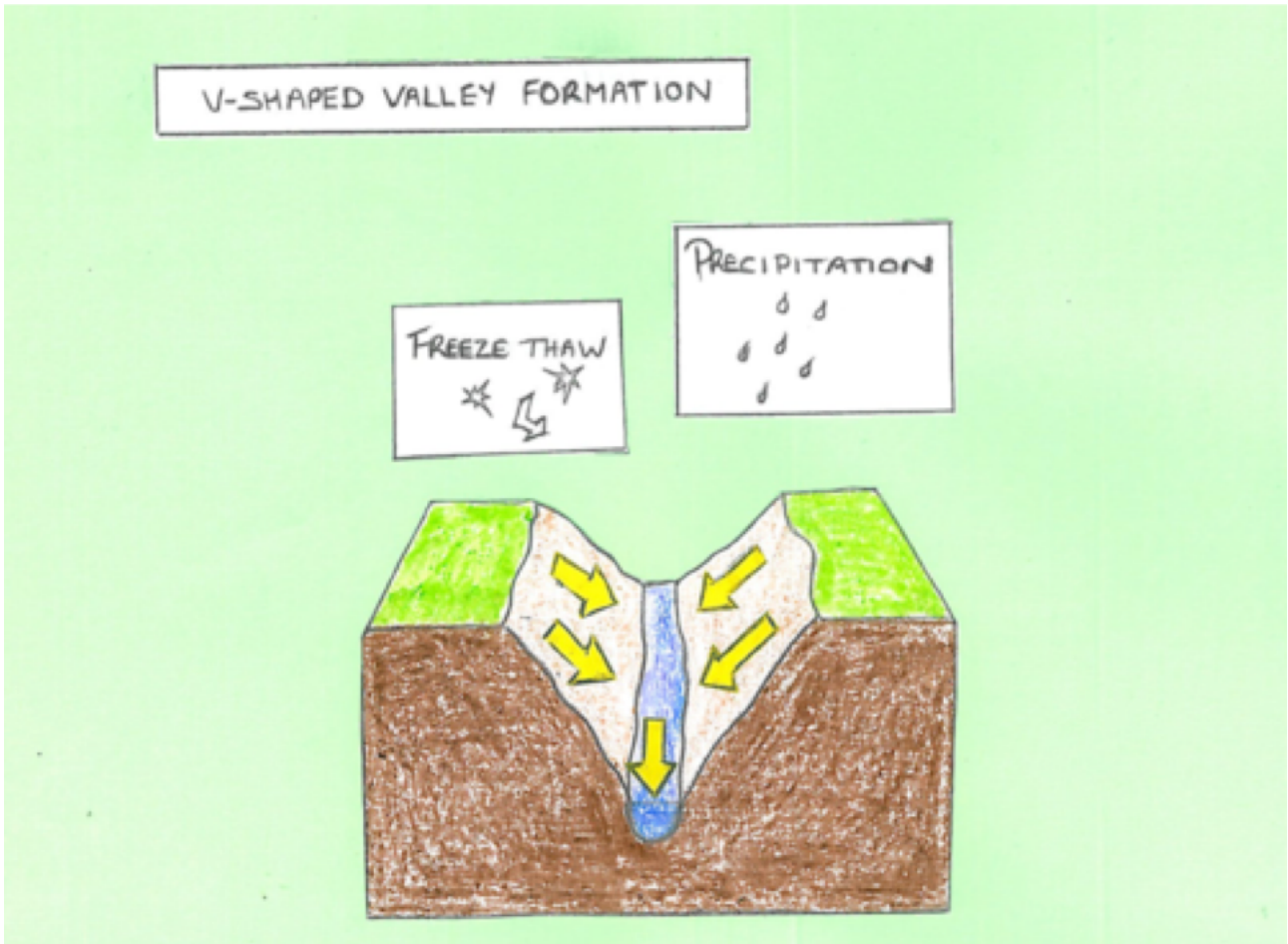
The students create a stop motion animation explaining the different features which can occur along the course of a river. Working as a class they can research the processes leading to the different river formations, then in groups create separate animations of each of the main processes. Finally, the individual animations can be put together to produce the whole story of the river..

1. As a class, discuss the features which may be found along the river. These will include v-shaped valleys, interlocking spurs, waterfalls and gorges closer to the river's source, and meanders, oxbow lakes, flood plains, levees and deltas which are found closer to the river's mouth. Divide the class into groups and let each group decide which river feature they are going to portray in their individual animations along with the processes involved in its formation.
2. Each group must plan the 'story' for their animation and create a storyboard representing the individual scenes which will form the story. This will help them to keep track of their animation once they get started. How are they going to portray the physical processes involved in the formation of their particular river feature? This is the trickiest part of the project and the students will really have to think deeply about the subject matter to come up with the right solution. The groups must also work together to decide how they are going to ensure their separate animations will run seamlessly into each other once they are all put together.
3. Ask the children to create a range of props to use for their animation. The use of some similar elements in each individual animation will really help join them all together to make a cohesive final animation at the end of the project.
4. The children can now animate their chosen river processes. This will probably take more than one lesson so make sure that you have a safe place to store the sets and props when not in use :)
5. When all the animations are finished, export them as movie files and join them together in an application like iMovie to make one big project.
6. Watch the animation and review what has been learned.

On the next page is a diagram showing v-shaped valley formation which could be used as part of the animation.



River Features continued ...



Tip! You may want to make this into a wider reaching project about rivers, covering not only their formation but a socio-economic study of how they are used and how the different features of a river can affect the people living along its banks and further afield.