MODULE 3: LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION

With your storyboard complete, it's time to get started!

SET THE SCENE

Where does your story take place? Do you have a backdrop you can film in front of? Bedsheets are a great way to create a plain background if you don't have one. Or perhaps you can draw something to go behind your characters, or use a large blank piece of paper.

What other props or items (e.g. trees, buildings) can be in the frame? You can make it as simple or as complex as you like!

PRO TIPS:

- The most important thing to remember is to keep your filming device very still between photos, or the scene will shift randomly in your movie. A tripod is great for this, but you can also prop your device up against something sturdy, such as a stack of books.
- If you want your movement to look smoother, increase your "frames per second". But this also means you'll need to take a lot of photos!
- It's okay to use natural lighting, but using lamps (or lights that you can control) can be very helpful. Without 100% artificial light, it can be hard to keep the lighting consistent throughout the day (or if you're filming over several days).

PHOTO MODE

Tap the camera icon on the main screen to open the photo mode in Stop Motion Studio. Any photos that you take in this mode will automatically be added to your animation in order. Familiarize yourself with this screen - this is where you'll be spending most of your time.

Place your camera in front of your set, and start snapping away! Remember – to make the photo transitions smoother, you'll want to:
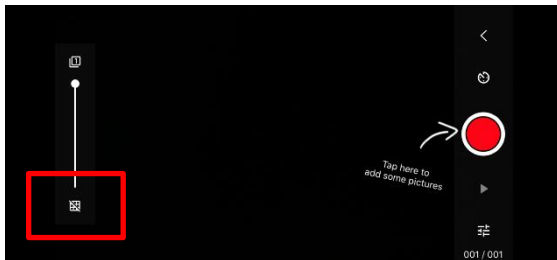a) Take a lot of photos
b) Make the movements as small as possible

ANIMATION GUIDES

Animation guides will allow you to plan your animation more easily and precisely. The animation path tool will even set up a path to animate an object along. The grid overlay option will also help you align your camera to your scene.
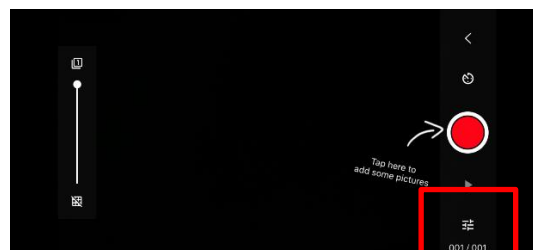
1. Tap and hold the grid symbol.
2. Within the animation guides editor, you can do things such as:
    a. Add a grid layer and change the number of rows and columns of the grid
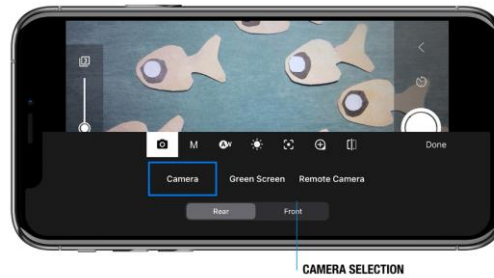   b. Add a path player and use the blue handles to change the path layout

CAMERA SETTINGS

If you want to customize the look of your movie, there are options to manually control your camera.

1. Tap the settings symbol.

2. Here, you can select your camera type (Camera, Green Screen, Remote Camera).

CAMERA SELECTION

3. Select a camera mode (Automatic, Automatic Locked, Program Mode, Manual Mode).

CAMERA MODE

4. Or change the camera settings (Exposure Compensation, White Balance, Focus, ISO, Shutter Speed, Zoom, and Mirror Mode).
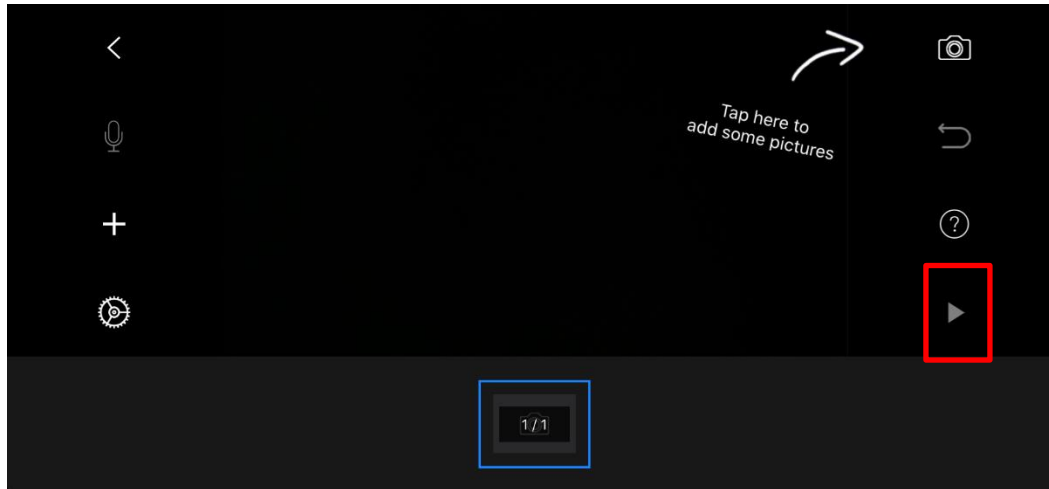

CAMERA SETTINGS

PLAY IT BACK

Once you've taken some photos, view your progress so far. Make sure to do this throughout the process, as it'll be easier to retake photos, or add more shots to your animation, before you move to your next scenes.

If you aren't happy with how smooth your animation looks, try increasing your frames per second (fps). A higher fps will make your video much smoother, but also much shorter as well (unless you're prepared to take a LOT of photos). Find a comfortable middle ground for your animation.

Keep moving your figures and taking photos, until you've made a video that you're happy with. Since every photo that you've taken represents one second of video time, this could be 20-30 seconds...or if you're feeling ambitious, even a minute or two!

Take me to more Stop Motion Animation modules!
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