

Educational materials

KOJAA

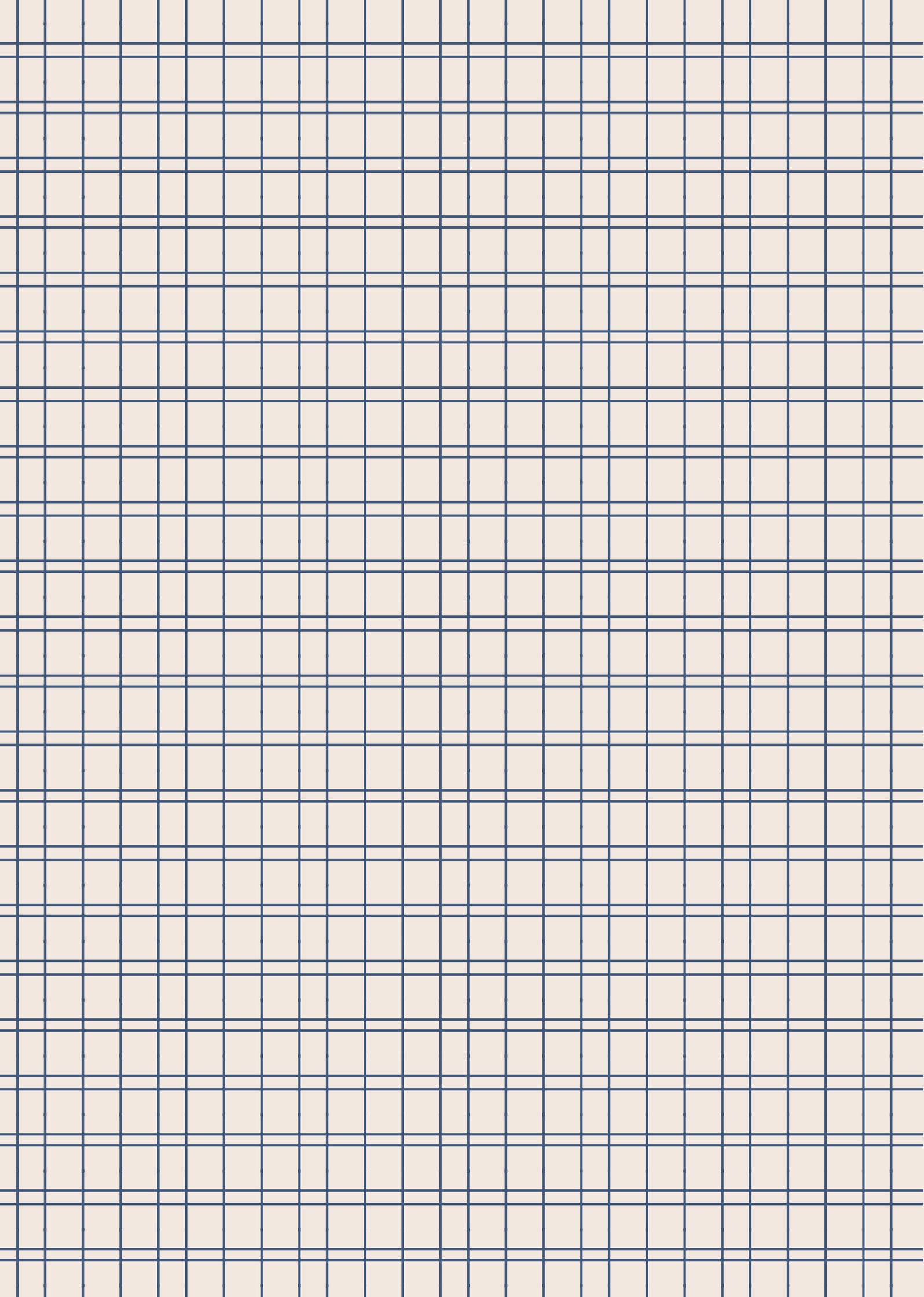
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YAA!



Texts

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→ Educational materials

These animated shorts showcase the weird and wacky experiences of boyish hero Koyaa as he struggles with everyday objects that spring to life and cause him no end of problems. The wild imagination on display in these stories is close to the way that children perceive the world, where objects can be attributed all kinds of meanings and characteristics. Koyaa handles his challenges by keeping his spirits up – which is perhaps the best way to tackle any problem. The witty, out-of-the-box

solutions created by Koyaa allow the challenges to develop in clever ways. The *Koyaa* films therefore illuminate the value of persistence and display the advantages of creative thinking – not only in a fantastic setting, but also in stressful everyday situations. Koyaa lives far from the urban churn, on a rocky ledge high above the clouds. The setting is an allegory for the freedom of nature and fresh air, which fuels the mind with fresh ideas.

Here's a wish
and there's a dream,
Happy mood,
we're all a team!

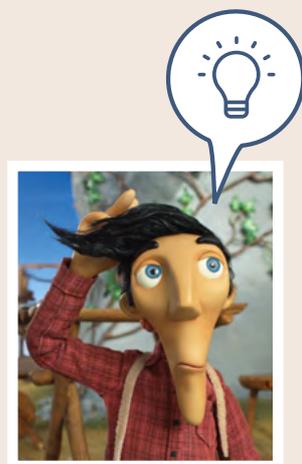
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→ How stop-motion animated films are made

An animated film is born as a **colourful story** written in the form of a screenplay. Puppet animation demands an especially high degree of precision when it comes to planning; this is to ensure that nothing gets lost or forgotten during the arduous animation process. A storyboard is therefore created prior to filming to enable everyone to follow the same plan to the letter. The **storyboard** is made up of shots arranged one after another by the film's director and director of photography. The images are numbered and marked with the duration of individual scenes. It's like a **comic book** that shows, in drawings or digital design, what every scene in the film should end up looking like.

The *Koyaa* films are created using the classic technique of **puppet stop-motion animation**. They are filmed in an animation studio using handmade puppets, sets and props crafted for each episode. As with all animation, stop-motion is done by **shooting images frame-by-frame** to create the illusion of motion. To make the puppet move smoothly, we have to take a picture of each new position, as well as all the objects we wish to move. When the images are played in rapid succession, the result is a continuous animated image. One second of film contains 25 images.



How many positions does Koyaa need to take one step? How many images are shot in one day? Who brings the puppets to life?

A single Koyaa step (the way it appears on film) takes 16 movements of the puppet and a photo of each position, meaning 16 frames of animation. In one nine-hour shooting day, around 125 successful frames are recorded. Since one second of film contains **25 frames**, this means that a full day of hard work yields a mere **five seconds of material**. The animator is the one who moves the puppet during the shooting – as we like to say, they breathe ‘soul’ into the character. Animators must be versed in various types of physiology, as well as body language and expression, since setting the puppet in certain positions ends up being a major part of the ‘feel’ of the character. Animators work closely with the director, who advises them on how the characters should behave.

How many images does it take to make one film? How long is the shooting process?

Discounting the beginning and end credits, which list all the artists and contributors to the series, each *Koyaa* film is **2 minutes and 15 seconds** long. One animator needs around **30 shooting days** to make one episode, which consists of **3,375 images**. More images are recorded during filming, but some of them don’t make it into the final edit. The director and the editor decide which images to use. We don’t leave too many behind on the cutting room floor, though: the scenes shoot are well prepared in advance.



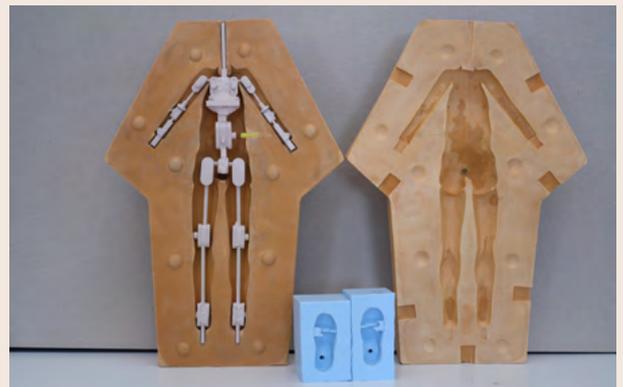
What is the Koyaa puppet made of?

How big is it?

The puppets are **made in Poland by a team of six puppet makers**. The basis for their appearance are the sketches and pictures we call **'character design'**. Koyaa's puppet is **27 cm** high, while Mr Raven's measures only **7 cm**. It is very important for us to be able to set a puppet into a certain position – and make sure that it stays there! This is made possible by the wire-frame skeleton inside every puppet. Koyaa's exterior is made of various materials: the body is **silicon**, as are the hands, while the head is solid plastic cast from a rubber mould. An **aluminium wire** runs through the extremities, hair and cap, which allows for even finer levels of adjustment. Koyaa's clothes are sewn together in the same way as regular clothes – just that they're obviously a great deal smaller.

How does Koyaa express his emotions and move his eyes?

Koyaa's head consists of an **upper part** (forehead, nose and eyes) and a **lower part** (the mouth). **Fifty-six different interchangeable face parts are used**; these allow us to give our hero a wide range of expressions. The two sections of the head are connected with a magnet, which makes them easier to move around. The line between the two parts runs across Koyaa's head during shooting – but is subsequently erased when the images are processed on computer. The eyes, also an important element of expression, are moved using a tool resembling a needle. The eyebrows are fixed to the forehead



with a magnet, which means that we can move them as well. If we want Koyaa to wink, we can use one of **four different plastic eyelid pieces**.

How long does it take to make a Koyaa puppet?

The puppet-makers work hard for three months crafting the puppets, making several identical copies of Koyaa's body, hands and face parts. Why? Well, if we want to use two animators at the same time (as we do), they each have to have their own perfectly identical puppet, with the same clothes and facial expressions. What's more, since the puppets are used every day, parts get dirty, clothes get torn and wires snap – which is why we have **several costumes** and parts ready to go at any time. While making the six most recent *Koyaa* films, we replaced **21 pairs of hands**, for example: the little wires in the fingers eventually break and the silicon gets grubby and cracked.

How is Koyaa able to stand on the set without falling over? How do we get the objects to fly?

Koyaa's shoes have threaded holes in them, so he can be screw-fixed to the set and doesn't end up in awkward poses. When we want Koyaa to jump, we use a metal crane – a sort of mechanical hand – to hold the puppets and other objects in place. When the shot is done, our computer editors erase the crane from the images so that they don't appear in the film.



How are the sets and props made?

How big are they?

Like the puppets, the sets and props are also carefully designed, with series of sketches acting as the 'construction plans'. **The sets** are made from standard craft materials, such as **wood, styrofoam and various glues**. Rocks, for example, are made of styrofoam covered with a powdered resin glue and water mix. The props are made of wood, plastics and malleable materials that harden when dried. Naturally, everything has to be properly measured and in proportion. The central setting (the **rocky ledge** on which Koyaa's house stands) is **270 cm tall** and **350 cm wide**. The props have to be in proportion to the set and the puppets, so most are between 1 and 5 cm in size. The sets, props and puppets are made to a scale of 1:6, meaning that they would be six times bigger than they are if they were real.

Where does Koyaa get his voice?

The sound dubbing process begins after the images have been recorded and assembled (edited) into their proper order. **Voice actors** produce the **sounds and noises** as the film is played in the studio; we then record those sounds, edit them and use the best ones to create Koyaa's sonic world.



How are the sound and music created?

The film features different kinds of sound:

Foleys, special effects and an original music.

The Foley artists record their magic in a sound studio using all kinds of materials. To match the picture, they record the sounds of various items that best fit the desired effect; this helps them to create a convincing sonic backdrop. An example: the sound of the Raven's wings was created using toilet paper! The atmospheres and special sound effects are also stored in various sound banks, from where they can be copied when needed. **Original music** is also composed for each episode, with the genre matching the events on screen. Sometimes Koyaa is accompanied by wild jazz, and sometimes by jumpy ska, playful funk or whatever vibe suits the image. All the music is recorded by professional musicians in the studio, which results in a polished and organic sound.

How many people work on Koyaa?

Over 35 artists help bring the Koyaa's adventures to life. Since they are busy working in different fields, such as directing, production, set design, puppet manufacture and post-production, not all of them work together all the time. However, **an average of 15 people are working on the series** on any given shooting day.

How long did it take to make the six films?

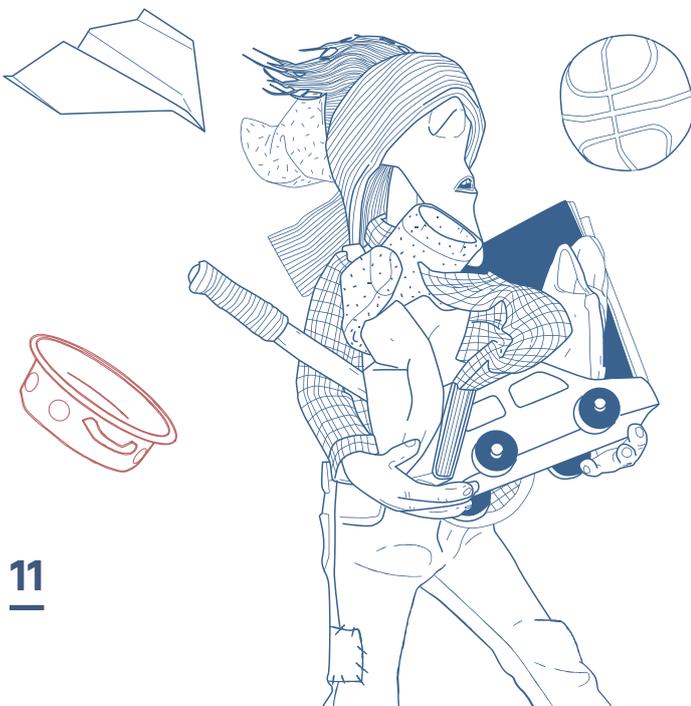
The final scripts were completed in October 2014 and the films in March 2017: that's two-and-a-half years of intensive work!



→ Talking points

Having watched the series, you can use these talking points to discuss *Koyaa* with children at home, at nursery or primary school – or indeed anywhere else. The talking points revolve around the stories, as well as film language and the general concept of animation. By presenting unusual situations to the hero and his audience, the films encourage creative exploration, opening up a range of interesting subjects. These can be used for discussions between educators, parents and, of course, kids, who might just pick up some additional critical thinking and abstract reflection skills when addressing the stories.

Huh



Koyaa, our animated hero

- Who is Koyaa?
- What does he look like? What are his clothes like? What kind of character is he?
- How old do you think Koyaa is?
- How can we tell when Koyaa has had a great idea?
- Do the solutions he comes up with make him happy? How do we know? Does Koyaa use language and words?

Is speaking the only way to communicate in life? Talk about non-verbal communication and the ways in which people are able to interact without words, i.e. by using just their body language, expressions and gestures.

- Does Koyaa solve his problems at the first attempt? When he fails, how does he react? Is Koyaa persistent?

Imagine you are in Koyaa's shoes! How would you try to solve that particular situation?

- **What emotions do you experience while watching Koyaa's adventures?**

Besides laughing at Koyaa's wacky adventures, do you ever feel sorry for him when he falls, surprised when something unexpected happens, relieved when you see he will be alright?

Koyaa and his trusty friend

- **Who is Koyaa's best friend?**
- **What does Mr Raven do? What kinds of material does he use to make his birdhouses?**
- **Are the birdhouses connected to the story? In what way?**
- **What is the relationship between Koyaa and Mr Raven? Do they react to trouble the same way or in different ways?**
- **How do Koyaa and Mr Raven show that they respect each other?**

Talk about the bonds between people and animals (pets, animals in general), the way we treat them and how we co-exist as neighbours on the planet.

Unruly items, wondrous landscapes

- **Where does Koyaa live? Describe the landscape, his house and his surroundings.**
- **Why do you think Koyaa lives on a lone mountain, far away from the city and other people? What does he like about his rocky ledge?**

Think about all the different places in which people can live: cities, villages, remote mountain settlement, forests ... Use photos or the internet to show children unusual living environments.

- **What roles do common household items play in Koyaa's life?**

Name some of the objects found in the kitchen, bathroom and children's room. Think how these might come to life, what characters they might express, what roles they could play. Have any of the kids' bedsheets ever been used as a giant tent, or perhaps the roof of a castle?

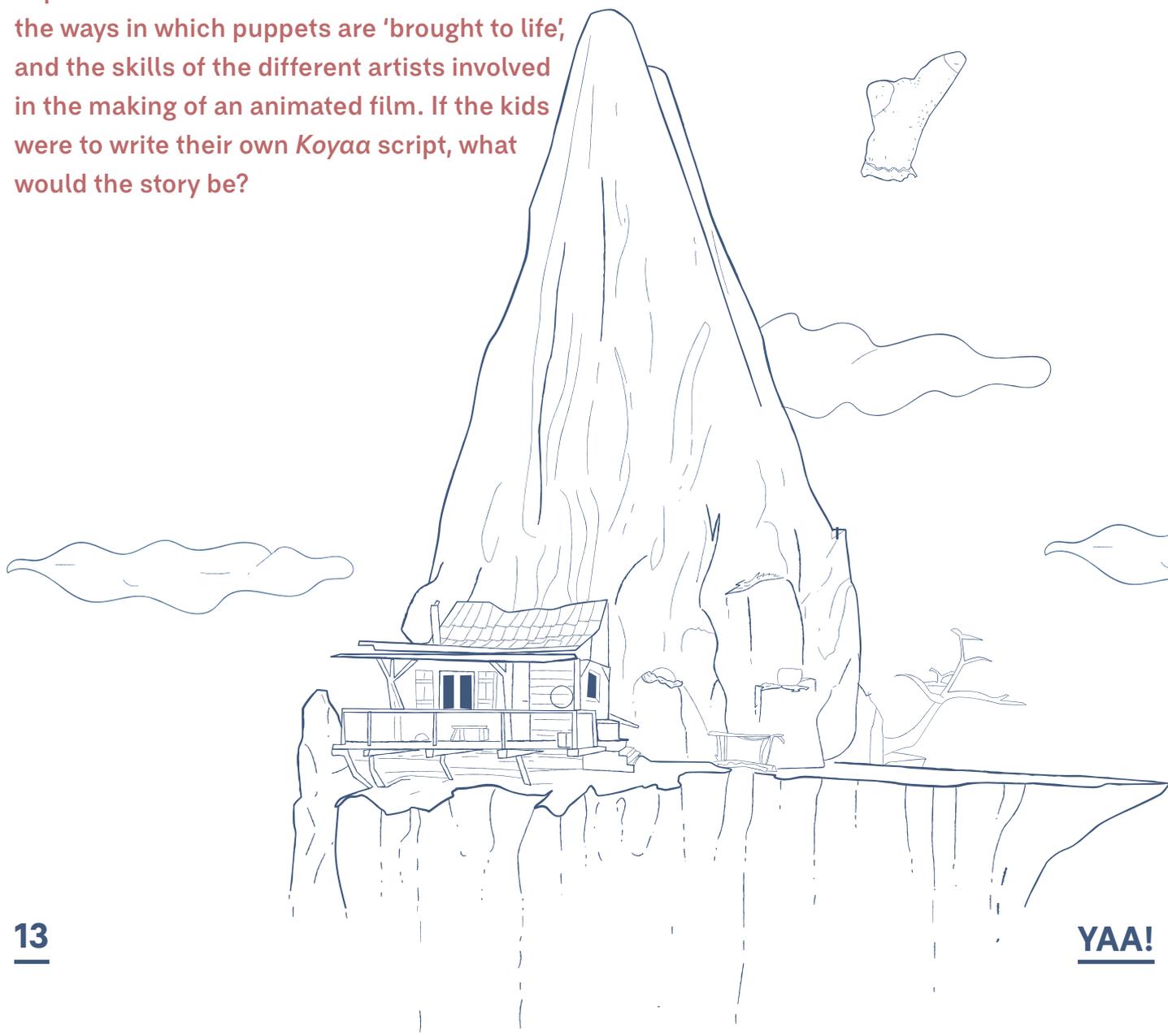
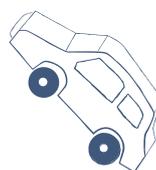
- **Do the seasons change in the films? How can you tell which season an episode is taking place in? What does Koyaa do in the winter, in spring, in summer, in the autumn? What does he do when the weather is bad?**

Talk about the seasons. What is the weather usually like outside? What activities do people do in a particular season?



- **Does making an animated film require lots of imagination? How do you think a series like *Koyaa* is actually made?**

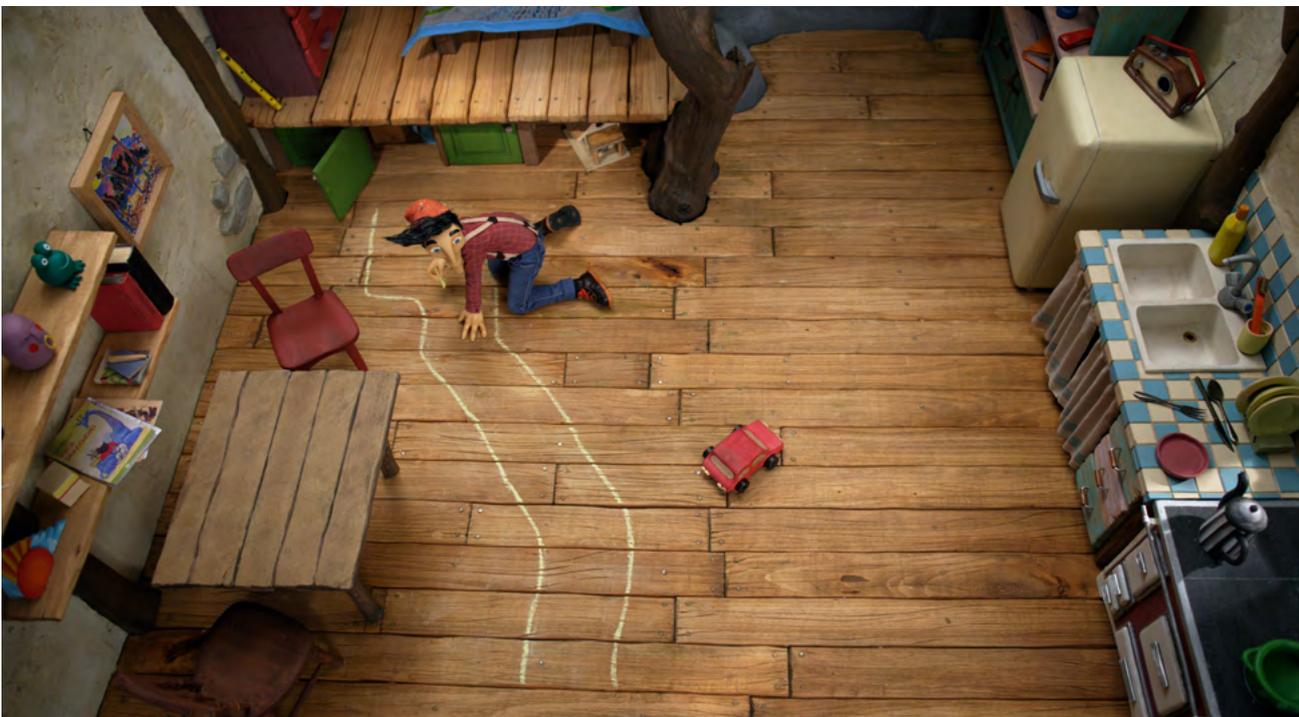
Explain animation to the children. Discover the ways in which puppets are 'brought to life', and the skills of the different artists involved in the making of an animated film. If the kids were to write their own *Koyaa* script, what would the story be?



Koyaa - Naughty Toy Car



- What image appears on the letter in the mailbox?
- What is the weather like? How can we tell? What other kinds of weather do we know?
- What object comes to life in the film, and how does it act?
- What material is the toy car made of? What colour is it? Can cars be made from other materials, too? If yes, which materials?
- What is Mr Raven's birdhouse being made from? How is it connected to the story?
- What is Koyaa's room like at the beginning? What does Koyaa have to do to improve it? Do you ever clean your own room, too?
- What does Koyaa do to trick the car into driving into the cupboard?
- Do your own toys ride around like that sometimes?



Koyaa - Wild Sunbed



- What image appears on the letter in the mailbox?
- What season is it outside? How can we tell?
- Are you hot in the summer, too? What do you do to cool down?
- What object comes to life in the film? What animal does it remind you of, and why? What sounds do some other animals make?
- What is Mr Raven's birdhouse being made from? How is it connected to the story?
- How does Koyaa manage to ride the sunbed?
- What is the music like?
- How does Koyaa finally calm the sunbed down?



Koyaa - Flying Workbook



- What image appears on the letter in the mailbox?
- What is Koyaa doing on the terrace in front of the house?
- What object comes to life in the film? What is it doing?
- What animal does the flying book remind you of? What other animals can fly around like that?
- What letters are written in the workbook?
- How many letters does the alphabet have? How many languages do you know? Do all alphabets have the same letters?
- What is Mr Raven's birdhouse being made from? How is it connected to the story?
- How does Koyaa trick the workbook into playing nicely? What other kinds of book do you know?



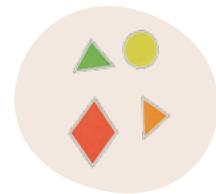
Koyaa - Dancing Socks



- What image appears on the letter in the mailbox?
- What time of the day is it? How can you tell?
- What objects come to life and what are they doing? Are the socks related? In what way?
- Where do the socks hide from Koyaa?
- What is Mr Raven's birdhouse being made from? How is it connected to the story?
- How does Koyaa lure the sock back onto his foot?
- Why do people even wear socks?



Koyaa – Silly Stickers



- What image appears on the letter in the mailbox?
- What does Koyaa want to do with the stickers?
- How are the stickers being naughty?
- What is Mr Raven's birdhouse being made from? How is it connected to the story?
- How does Koyaa get the stickers
- to finally come closer and behave?
- Do you also enjoy sticking stickers to things? Do they ever annoy you? In what way?
- How come the stickers stick to the window in the end? Did anything change with the window?



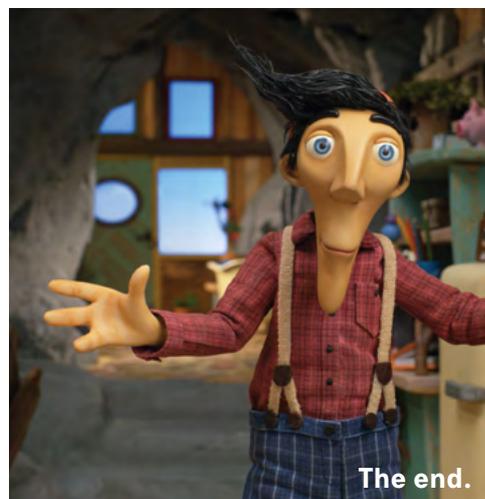
Koyaa - Freezing Scarf



- What image appears on the letter in the mailbox?
- What object comes to life in the film? What animal does it resemble, and why?
- Koyaa and the scarf show us they're cold without mentioning it. What moves and sounds do they make to show that? What other sensations can we express without using words?
- What is Mr Raven's birdhouse being made from? How is it connected to the story?
- What clothes do you put on when you're cold?



→ KOYAA - Dancing Socks
Photo comic of the film



Animated films

Director: Kolja Saksida

Screenwriters: Marko Bratuš, Kolja Saksida

Slogan author: Milan Dekleva

Character design: Blaž Porenta

Concept design: Gregor Nartnik

Animators: Julia Peguet, Will Hodge

Director of photography: Miloš Srdić

Editors: Monika Drahotuski, Tomaž Gorkič

Music: Miha Šajina, Borja Močnik

Sound design: Julij Zornik

DI colourist: Teo Rižnar

Voice actors: Frano Mašković, Žiga Saksida

Set designers: Mateja Rojc, Simon Hudolin,
Leon Vidmar

Executive producer: Matija Šturm

Co-producers: Tanja Prinčič, Marina Andree
Škop, Darija Kulenović Gudan, Žiga Pokorn,
Teo Rižnar, Miloš Srdić

Producer: Kolja Saksida

Educational materials

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Živkovič, Deja Škerjanc

Translation: Jeremi Slak

Proofreading: Joel Smith

Photography: Blaž Miklič, Tomaž Šantl

Concept and character design sketches:
Gregor Nartnik, Blaž Porenta

Design: Pikto

Production: ZVVIKS

Co-production: Radio Television Slovenia,
NuFrame, A Atalanta, Studio dim

Supported by: Slovenian Film Centre,
public agency of the RS, Film Studio Viba
Film Ljubljana, Croatian Audiovisual Centre

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