

Build a Phenakistoscope

An activity of "A cartoon mouse that everyone knows".

Read the article, "A cartoon mouse that everyone knows" (page 22– 23, *What's Up* January 2025). One of the oldest devices for animation is called a phenakistoscope. It works by showing action drawings of still objects in sequence. When these still images are shown very rapidly, we see them as moving. Try making your very own phenakistoscope.

1. Watch this video to find out how a phenakistoscope works and how to make it:

Phenakistoscopes | STEAM Project

➤ <https://youtu.be/5N2ffj5k-6E?feature=shared>

Mike Cope | COPETOONS (22 Mar 2021)

2. With a partner, follow the instructions to create your phenakistoscope.

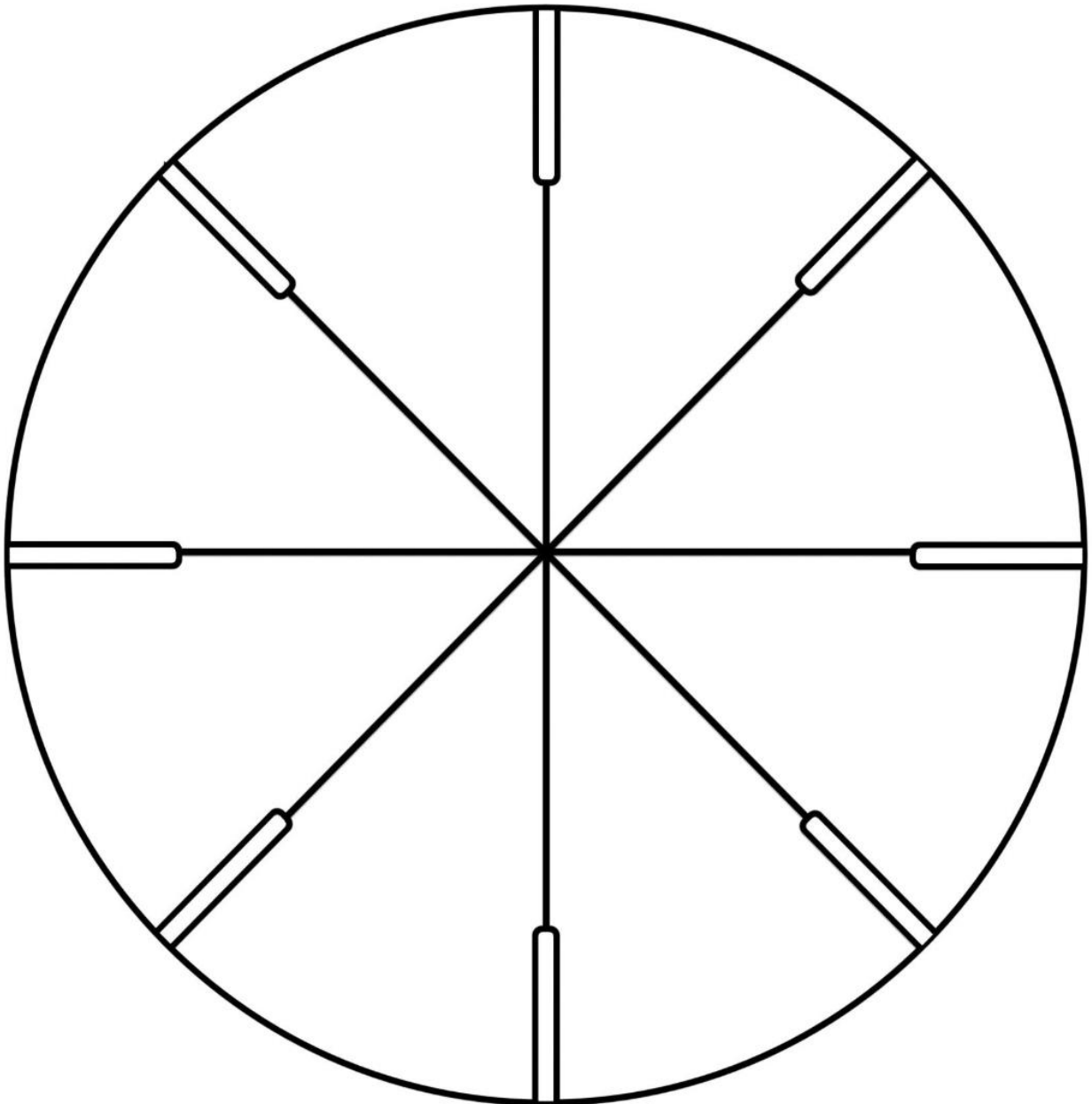
Materials:

Cardstock, scissors, glue, markers, a skewer (e.g. satay stick, chopstick, pencil).

Method

- Cut out the circular template provided and glue it onto cardstock for sturdiness.
 - Carefully cut along the slits marked on the outer edges. Just as it was shown in the video, these slits allow your eye to see the animation in motion.
 - Plan a simple, repetitive animation (e.g. a bouncing ball, hopping frog, flapping bird, a snapping crocodile etc).
 - Draw each step of the motion in a separate segment of the circle. Colouring is optional. You can choose to just use black markers. Keep the art bold for clarity.
 - Insert a skewer through the centre of the circle to act as a handle. Secure with tape.
 - Spin the phenakistoscope in front of a mirror while looking through the slits. Watch your animation come to life!
3. Add sound effects!
 - Look at your animation and think about what sounds match the motion. E.g. "boing" sounds for a bouncing ball
 - Using your voice, create suitable sound effects for your animation. Experiment with timing to match the spinning speed of the phenakistoscope.
 - Record your animation and sound effects. Alternatively, you can also play the sound effects live.

PHENAKISTOSCOPE TEMPLATE



4. Present your short animation to your classmates. Have fun!
5. Reflect on your experience of making and using your phenakistoscope. Respond to these questions. Elaborate on each answer.
 - a) Which part of this activity did you find the most challenging? Why?
 - b) In what ways did you enjoy making and sharing your animation?
 - c) How did your classmates respond to your show?
 - d) Based on this experience, do you think phenakistoscopes are fun?