

I've been drawing for as long as I can remember, and more than that I've always loved telling stories through my art. I was always a little intimidated by animation, but Freestyle really pushed me past that, and now it's one of my favorite mediums for storytelling.

I knew I wanted to create some sort of narrative-driven animation for this project, and Sofía Domínguez and I really wanted to work together too, since we have been friends from the start of Freestyle. In the end we decided to create an opening animation for our worldbuilding project from English (which we collaborated on with Aditi Biswas too) as if it were a real cartoon!

This project was very ambitious for both Sofia and I. It's an extremely busy time of year, and we only had about two months to create an entire animation. We really wanted to create a polished and cohesive final product too, which we knew would take a lot of time.

Still, Sofia and I are really good friends, and we have a LOT of experience working together—I'm pretty sure we've collaborated on every single group project at Freestyle! In her words, we're practically Best Friend Business Partners. We have very similar values, both wanting to work hard to create the best thing we can, while also realizing we need to put our health first. I think this really let us support and motivate each other throughout the process, and I could never have done this on my own!

To prepare for the project, we did research on previously made cartoon openings for shows like Gravity Falls, Star vs. the Forces of Evil, and The Owl House. We were also hugely inspired by the indie animator memedokies on YouTube, especially their video "FORK AND KNIFE, FOOD FIGHTERS!"

The process was long and stressful, but Sofía and I both learned so much from it. We got a lot better at organizing large projects and truly collaborating on every step of it. Every single thing in our finished animation is something we both worked on, which I think is really cool! We also learned to have a much more streamlined process. We planned everything out well, and had a strong foundation to build on as we moved from storyboards to keyframing and all the way to post-production.

We gained a lot of new practical animation skills too. We both learned a lot of new techniques for post-production in After Effects, which helped make our animation look much more cohesive and polished. We also got much better at animating in a simplified and consistent style.

If we could do this project again, I think we would try to study more intro animations and figure out how to show worldbuilding better, because it wasn't super clear how the magic system works in this world. We would also try to add more depth to our animations, since we didn't really make use of foreground or background, which caused some animations to look a little flat.

Still, both of us are so proud of the work we put in and everything we learned from it. I've gained so many skills, especially in organization and composition, that will allow me to better tell stories through different mediums, and that's extremely valuable to me! I'm super happy with how our project turned out too, and I'm so grateful for the opportunity to create something I'm so passionate about with one of my favorite people. I hope that our passion really shines through our work, and inspires you to go create something too.