**Unit 4 Creating Digital Animation**

**Testing the animation**

Developing your final animation for assessment is likely to be a lengthy process. You will need to develop prototypes, practice techniques and refine aspects of the animation until you arrive at the completed product. Testing and previewing is unlikely to be a single event. You will need to think about this throughout the development process, testing and reviewing parts of your animation early on in the process to decide whether some parts need further work before they are acceptable.

**Functionality**

You will need to test the functionality of your animation. When doing this, ask yourself the following questions:

* Does it play properly?
* Is the animation reasonably smooth?
* Does the soundtrack play?
* Is it audible?
* Is it in reasonable synchronisation with the action?

Remember: your animation must be between 30 seconds and two minutes in length.

**Fit for purpose**

As well as testing the functionality of your animation, you also need to review if it is fit for purpose. For this, you must return to the original requirements you stated in the design of the animation. You need to consider if what you have produced meets the intended purpose of the animation and if it is likely to appeal to the stated target audience. For example, if your target audience is young children, you need to check that the content of your animation really will appeal to them, and that the language you have used is understandable for your chosen age group.

**Getting feedback on your animation**

It is often difficult to see flaws or weaknesses in your own work, but others can usually provide constructive feedback. For prototypes, this feedback can be informal. However, for your final version, you must get formal feedback by using either a written questionnaire or audio/video recorded interviews.

The questions you should ask your reviewers about your final product include:

* Will it appeal to its intended audience and how well does it meet their needs? (Make sure you tell your reviewers who your intended audience is).
* Is the movement of the characters realistic? Are there some parts that are better than others?
* Is the timing of the movement and action appropriate, or do things happen too quickly or too slowly?
* Is the quality of the sound appropriate? Does it synchronise well with the animation?

**Documenting improvements**

Following the testing and feedback, you will need to make improvements to your animation and you should document the changes you make. The simplest way to do this is to take ‘before’ and ‘after’ screenshots.

**Exporting and compressing animation files**

Once your animation is complete, you will need to export it from Flash into a format that other people (who may not have the full Flash software on their computer) can view. Flash animations are designed to be played using a web browser. So that your animation can be played using a web browser, you need to export it as a SWF file.

When Flash creates a SWF file it compresses the graphics in your animation. This avoids creating a very large file. The larger your SWF file, the longer it will take to download from a website. If your resulting SWF file is still very large, you can adjust the compression setting.