

Interdisciplinary Animation Competition

Deadline for submission: December 20, 2025

Submit entry to: john.beusterien@ttu.edu

Lubbock Waters is a museum that will teach children about the ecosystem and conservation in West Texas. We are announcing an Interdisciplinary Animation Competition which will create a pilot exhibit for Lubbock Waters.

The Competition is an opportunity for Texas Tech University undergraduate and graduate students who are enrolled full-time.

The music award will be awarded to a student or student team that creates the sound for the Pilot Storyboard for Lubbock Waters (see below).

The animation award will be awarded to a student or student team that creates the animation for the Pilot Storyboard for Lubbock Waters (see below).

Cash awards (funds pending):

Music: \$4000

Animation: \$4000

Questions:

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Overview of Pilot Storyboard for Lubbock Waters

Animation Short List

1. Title

A Playa Lake Home

2. Title of Series

Dabble and Blue

3. One-Sentence Summary

Dabble (the Duck) and Blue (the Horned Toad) leave their playa lake home, fly around outer space, and return.

4. Primary Target Audience

Kids (6–7 years old)

5. Purpose

Meet 1st Grade TEKS (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills) for First Grade Geography 5A—identify and describe physical characteristics of a place to better understand world (“Geography. The student understands physical and human characteristics of place to better understand their community and the world around them. The student is expected to: (A) identify and describe the physical characteristics of place such as landforms, bodies of water, Earth's resources, and weather; and (B) identify and describe how geographic location influences the human characteristics of place such as shelter, clothing, food, and activities.”)

Will accompany interactive other exhibits (created by others) that clearly identify and label playa lake characteristics and show the human impact on playa lakes.

6. Lesson

Identify three characteristics about playa lakes: they are round; they fill with water after it rains; and animals live in and around them.

7. Style

Include humor. This project is open to most visual and sound styles. Image and sound will be developed in tandem. The project aspires to see as much inspiration in the creation of the animation and integration of sound as possible.

8. Duration

3 minutes (3 videos / each 1 minute). Each one-minute video will be accompanied by at least one separate exhibit.

9. Story Synopsis (Short)

In the first segment, a dormant playa lake is filled with rainwater and Dabble returns. In the second, Dabble carries Blue on an interplanetary journey and then returns home. In the third, Blue is shunned by other playa animals and Dabble comes to his rescue. The segment ends with a scene that marks the beginning of Dabble and Blue's next journey.

10. Main Characters

The two main characters are animals, a duck and a horned toad. They speak and Dabble wears a pair of glasses. Despite each's human characteristics, the animation highlights their life as individual animals.

Name (Animal)	Description	Role
Dabble (Female green winged teal)	Wears Clark Kent glasses. Speaks in big-sisterly voice. Twenty-something.	Entertains and compassionate to Blue.
Blue (Horned toad or North American Horned Lizard)	Speaks with 9-year-old boy voice. Lonely.	Protagonist. Enjoys Dabble's company.

11. References

One possible model is *Roberto*. See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mrl3N31mde8>.

For information about playa lakes information about aquifer recharge, the theme of Animation #2 in the series, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YZ0k7NWvGCU>.

For information about water on the plains, see PBS YouTube "Sustain the Plains." For example, for animals which are a focus of the animation see:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9uvR1ONsHLk&list=PLavP03Pj5xEo8CDktX7b19dvl_cac18GW&index=3.

12. Animation Techniques

To be determined by animation team.

13. Sound / Music

Music, style, and voice over to be determined by sound team.

Suggested Pilot Storyboard for Lubbock Waters

Video 1: An Invisible Home

Purpose: Show playa lake before and after it is filled with rain and playa lake animals.

Duration: First and last scenes have a longer focus. Around 15 seconds. Intermediary scenes are each only a second or two.

Audio: Music accompanies change in weather and culminates with rain and the playa lake filling and Blue's excited exclamation at Dabble's return.

Scene	Duration in seconds	Description	Camera Angle	Weather	Audio	Notes / Dialogue
1	15	Dry Playa Lake shots. Tan / yellow. Sunshine.	Diagonal	cloudy bright		Close up of grey cracked playa lakebed. Pan out shots of playa, then playa and its buffer, then pan out with playa and other dry playa lakes around it
2	1	Invisible horny toad hiding in plain sight eating a red ant.	Slightly angled from above	cloudy bright		Camara angle pans back to center of dry playa, moves through buffer to red ant mound, ants march in line carrying grass from buffer, some ants from line periodically disappear.
3	1	Slightly visible horny toad eating an ant.	Slightly angled from above	cloudy bright		Camouflaged horny toad becomes slightly perceptible.
4	1	Horny toad no longer camouflaged visible eats an ant.	Different shots of horny toad body	cloudy bright		
5	1	Empty dry playa lake, surface cracks		cloudy bright		
6	1	Visible horny toad eats an ant		cloudy bright		
7	1	Empty dry playa lake surface cracks		cloud cover		
8	1	Great Plains Toad in stasis below surface cracks		cloud cover		
9	1	Visible horny toad eats an ant		cloud cover		
10	1	Empty dry playa lake surface cracks		cloud cover		
11	1	Tadpole Shrimp in stasis below surface cracks		cloud cover		

12	1	Visible horny toad eats an ant		cloud cover		
13	1	Empty dry playa lake surface cracks		cloud cover		
14	1	Orb Snail in stasis on grass in buffer		cloud cover		
15	1	Visible horny toad eats an ant		cloud cover		
16	15	Darker clouds. Thunder. Lightning.		Rain.		
17	1	Orb Snail eating grass in buffer		Sunshine.		
18	1	Two American coots land on playa lake		Sunshine.		
19	1	Three Black necked stilts on shoreline walking		Sunshine.		
20	1	One Black neck stilt eats Orb Snail		Sunshine.		
21	2	Male and female green winged teals circle twice above playa lake		Sunshine.		
22	1	Male green winged teal lands on playa lake and begins to dabble		Sunshine.		
23	1	Female green winged teal lands on playa lake and swims by male		Sunshine.		
24	5	Horny toad emerges from burrow		Sunshine.		
25	1	Horny toad climbs now inactive ant mound		Sunshine.		
26	5	Female green winged teal leaves water and waddles to Blue		Sunshine.		Blue: "Dabble. Dabble. I can't believe it. Dabble, you're back!" Dabble: "I am." Blue: "Dabble, let's go for a ride!"
27	15	Wet Playa Lake shots. Cyan.		Sunshine.		

Video 2 Back Home after Rollercoasting

Purpose: Show that playa lakes are round or circular.

Duration: First and last scenes have a longer focus. Around 15 seconds. Intermediary scenes are each only a second or two.

Audio: Specific musical theme accompanies moments when circles are shown.

Scene	Duration in seconds	Description	Camera Angle	Weather	Audio	Notes / Dialogue
1	15	American coots circling perimeter of playa (3 times)	Vertical aerial perspective			
2	1	Shots zoom out of playa	Vertical aerial perspective			
3	1	Jet stream flies over and slows over long river	Vertical aerial perspective			
4	1	Jet stream flies over and slow over Gulf of America				
5	1	Jet stream into space				
6	1	Fast moving white jet stream in space encircles yellowish- white sphere two times				
7	1	Jet stream flies to sphere that is blue with shades of green, brown, and white and encircles it once				
8	1	Jet stream stops with perspective of earth below.				
9	1	Still of silhouette of duck with horny toad with front two legs straddling duck neck.				Blue: What's going on? Giddy-up. Eee-ha. C'mon, girl. [Blue makes a click sound like a cowboy encouraging horse.] Blue: Why are you stopping? Giiidy-up, girl, giddy up.
10	1	Close-up of Dabble looking at earth.				

11	1	Close-up of Clark Kent glasses on her face.				
12	1	Close-up of Blue's horny toad back two legs butting into Dabble's green feathers, kicking her to keep moving.				Blue: Don't stop, you Dabbler, keep moving. Giiiddy up. Dabble: You know what that is? Blue: No idea, let's go. I loved that ride. Keep up the gallop.
13	1	Shot of round Earth				
14	1	Closeup of Dabble's face				Dabble: It's the earth, silly.
15	1	Close up Dabble's round eyes under glasses				Blue: No way, the earth? It's round like your eyes! C'mon, just a little more. Dabble: That's where our beautiful playa lake is.
16	1	Jet stream down to earth				
17	1	Jet stream slows over Gulf.				Blue: whee! this is fun.
18	1	Blue looks down.				Blue: that's not round
19	1	Jet stream slows over river in Texas Hill Country.				
20	1	Blue looks down.				Blue: and that's not round. Giddy, giddy up. I love this.
21	1	Jet stream slows over brown pivot irrigation plots in West Texas.				Blue: but those are round. They're all brown.
22	1	Stop above 5 empty brown playa lakes.				That's not us. They're all brown too. No water in those. Like our playa was. But not anymore.
23	1	Reach 5 filled playa lakes.				
24	1	Still of close perspective aerial view of one of five playa lakes in middle of other four: home. Waterfowl. Buffer around playa lake.				Dabble: yes, that's home sweet home. Aren't you getting hungry? [Blue's back legs are kicking Dabble.] Blue: No way. More. C'mon. Just a bit more. One more ride, please, one more ride.

						Dabble: Now stop your kicking and I'll give you an even better roller coaster ride in the morning.
25	5	Still of male green winged teal and other water fowl on play lake.				Blue: Don't stop. Let's go again. Paaa-Lease. Dabble: Can you see it? Blue: See what? Dabble: C'mon you can see Mr. Drake, can't you? Blue: I can. I can. He's on that one. Blue (timid, soft voice): What's going to happen next?
26	5	Shot of Dabble with Blue holding her more tightly as she goes up and then jet stream goes down like a rollercoaster.				Dabble (quack laugh): Just you wait... And seeeee. Blue (louder, fearful): What's going to happen? Dabble (laughing confidently): Just you wait and see. Blue (horrified, unable to contain screaming): What's going to happen next? Dabble (tears in eyes from laughter). Just you wait...And see.
27	1	Jet stream slows down.				
28	5	Blue jumps off of Dabble's back onto ant hill				Blue (horrified turns into relief then excitement): Again....Again, again, again...Again! Dabble: laughing Blue: again, again. That's the best (Dabble looks at Blue and smiles) Blue: There ain't no way I want to go back home. Just once more only once more, you're my pony boy I mean I'm sorry you're not my pony, ma'am. You're my best friend.

						Dabble: Sorry my little man you've got to have your snack and Mr. Drake is waiting with my dinner ready. Blue (enthusiasm waning, but one last attempt): you're my Dabble. Dabble: I'll tell you what. After dinner.
29	1	Dabble begins to hydroplane onto water				
30	1	Shot of American coots swimming near wake.				
31	1	Dabble continues hydroplaning on playa surface.				
32	1	Shot of Black-necked stilt on shore.				
33	1	Dabble stops, sided up next to male green winged teal, Mr. Drake.				
34	1	Western meadowlark flies from playa buffer rushes to ant mound.				
35	15	Pan out of two ducks circling perimeter of playa (3 complete circles around perimeter of playa, putting head in the water)				

Video 3 A New Journey

Purpose: Playa lake animals. Set up next video in series.

Audio: Note short moment of silence.

Scene	Duration in seconds	Description	Camera Angle	Weather	Audio	Notes / Dialogue
1	2	Tiger Salamander walks toward ant mound				
2	2	Tiger Salamander turns head down towards the entrance to Blue's burrow.				Tiger Salamander: get out of here. You're no toad. And you aren't blue.
3	2	Tiger Salamander walks toward playa				
4	2	Great Plains Toad pops out buffer grass and spits.				Great Plains Toad: you horny toad, get out, you ain't no toad. And you ain't blue.
5	2	Great Plains Toad disappears in mud.				
6	5	Still. Calm playa lake.			Silence.	
7	2	Blue timidly comes out of burrow.				
8	1	New Mexico Spadefoot pops out of muddy sand right in front of Blue, scaring him.				New Mexico Spadefoot (laughs): you're blue? hey horny toad, you are no toad, get out.
9	1	Blue looks away in fear.				
10	1	Dabble dive bombs downward.				
11	1	New Mexico Spadefoot sinks underground in fear				
12	1	Dabble swoops up with Blue on her back.				
13	5	Dabble slowly flies to get aerial view of lake.				Blue: I'm not worth anything, Dabble. I'm not even a toad. Those guys never let me be.

14	2	Dabble and Blue hover over playa lake.				Dabble: C'mon Blue Boy. You've got something none of them have. You can see things nobody else can. Blue: I love our playa when you fly back. It's so round and perfect. And perfect and round.
15	3	Both look down at the playa. Blue squinting.				Blue: Do you mean that snail crawling over there?
16	2	still of Orb Snail crawling.				Dabble: No. no. I don't mean that you have great vision. I mean can see through things.
17	1	Dabble flies in a circle around the lake.				
18	1	Dabble leans back her neck, offering glasses with the gesture.				Dabble: Here put these glasses on, mi rey. Blue (taking glasses and trying on glasses which are too big) Can I? Dabble: Of course.
19	1	American Coots swimming.				
20	1	Black-necked stilt walking on shore.				
21	1	Western Meadowlark returns to rushes in buffer.				Blue: I can see all those birds! So clearly. Dabble: Yes, but look in the water.
22	1	Six Tadpole Shrimp swimming.				
23	1	Blue looks in the water.				Blue: Oh, you mean all those little guys – I can see five, no six. Check them out! Shrimpy shrimp! Dabble: you see, you can see in the water.
24	2	Six Tadpole Shrimp swimming.				
25	1	Blue begins to kick Dabble like a horse.				Blue: What are we going to do this morning? Let's do our ride again.
26	1	Water flowing from playa into aquifer.				

27	1	Dabble has a disapproving look on her face.				Dabble: But wait Blue. C'mon. You can see more. You can see beyond the water. Blue: Amazing, I just can see below the bottom of the playa.
28	3	Dabble squints his eyes trying to see where water flows below.				Blue: Where is the water going?
29	1	Water flowing from playa into aquifer.				
30	1	Dabble turns upward. Then downward.				Dabble: This morning we are going on a rollercoaster ride even more magical than those planets we went to yesterday. Underground!
31	5	Water flowing from playa into aquifer.				
32	5	Still of Dabble's beak touching surface of playa lake.				Blue laughs and shouts in joy.