TOONTASTIC (https://TOONTASTIC.withgoogle.com/)

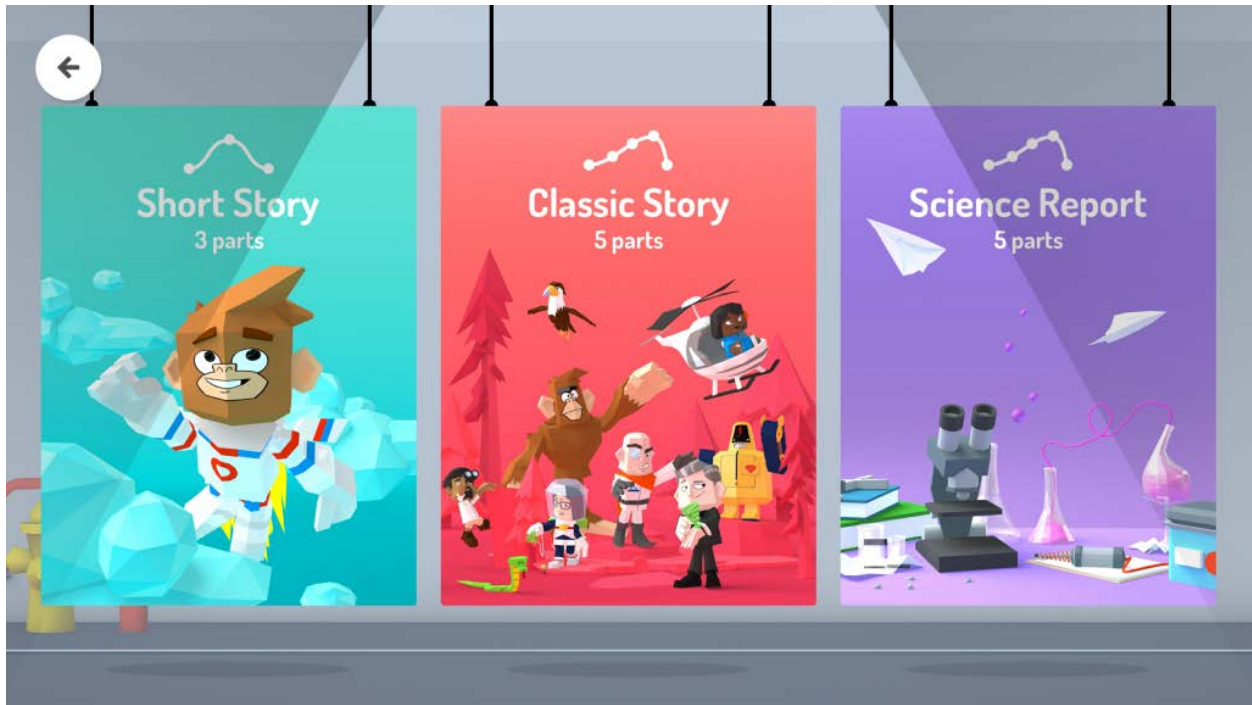## *TOONTASTIC is…*

…a creative digital storytelling application providing users with the ability to <u>draw, animate, narrate, and record</u> their own cartoons – as easily as doing a puppet show

✓ TOONTASTIC scaffolds the creative writing process through cartooning for learners aged <u>6 to 12</u>.

✓ According to the Cooney Center at Sesame Workshop, the new frontier of digital educational play sees young learners capturing their play as stories, <u>then sharing those stories with their peers around the world</u>.

✓ **Through creative storytelling activities, <u>learners become producers, writers, inventors, and artists</u>, and from a language learning perspective, exercise social-emotional and oral language skills through constructionism and divergent thinking.**

✓ <u>TOONTASTIC is available for both Android and iOS devices, phones and tablets</u>. It is also easy to export your work and cartoons can be accessed offline (*note that creations in the Idea Lab, showcasing the work of other students elsewhere, require the Internet to be downloaded).

✓ <u>Downloads are free, and no login or password is required</u>. It is rich in resources and engagement, as both the backgrounds and characters are 3D objects, although they are moved around easily in a 2D way/space, making the application simple to use.

✓ Instructions are in English, but all student creativity can be produced in *any* language. **The Story Arc helps frame their writing. Students use the app for creating everything from book reports to news broadcasts, historical reenactments, biographies, vocab/dialogue practice, and more.**

✓ **Just pick how many acts you want your story to have, either from there presets or by building your own story arc. Then, it's off to selecting either a pre-designed setting or drawing your own background. The advantage of the eight pre-made backgrounds is that they include plenty of background animations that you can easily trigger with a simple tap. After that, you pick your characters (and you can also draw your own, of course) and start animating your story by moving the characters around and doing the voiceovers while you do so.**

One great new feature is the recent addition of **interactive worlds** where students can set their stories in. If you see anything in the background that you think should be interactive, chances are you can **activate it with a tap**.

✓ It's a wonderful teaching tool, in that it <u>clearly and concisely explains the fundamentals of storytelling (character, setting, story arc, etc.)</u>. And it's remarkably easy to create the cartoons. The app allows learners to "animate" their characters by simply shuffling them around with their fingertips, and the digital device records all the movements -- and all the character voices and narration that learners provide -- and <u>plays them back like a real animated film</u>.

✓ Users can choose the **emotions** they want to convey (by picking the appropriate facial expression icon) and hear **music** that fits. An update to the original release has given users the welcome ability to save and re-use their custom-created characters and settings in multiple scenes.

Here is a brief sample of the application: **https://youtu.be/c0I58rFe18Q**.

"HOW TO"

According to the TOONTASTIC team, **it takes about a minute to make a one-minute scene and you can add up to six scenes per cartoon**.

In addition to the ability to <u>download</u>, work can be saved to the <u>photo library</u> of the app, or the <u>student's photo app</u> on their digital device.

The application provides a growing array of ready-made thematic backgrounds that students can begin with, but which can also be customized or changed:

-Epic Capers
-Historical Films
-Mysteries
-Social Lessons
-Cooking Shows
-Silent Films
-School Reports
-Fan Fiction
-Family Flicks
-Buddy Films
-SciFi
-Documentaries
-Memes

STORY ARC:

A Story Arc is a scaffolding tool that <u>helps you map out a story's plot</u>. Learners can practice communication skills using story arcs as <u>formulas for convincing arguments</u>. For example:

- **Short Story (3 parts)**

BEGINNING Where you introduce the characters and the setting of your story

MIDDLE Where something happens, like a problem

END Where your story wraps up

- **Classic Story (5 parts)**

SETUP Where you introduce the story setting and characters

CONFLICT Where you create a problem for your characters

CHALLENGE Where you make the problem even more difficult

CLIMAX Where you help the characters solve the problem

RESOLUTION Where you show the problem has been solved

Here are step-by-step instructions, <u>written out,</u> and also in the form of a <u>video</u>, taken from a teacher blog. The instructions end with a sample, <u>downloadable lesson plan</u> for implementing TOONTASTIC in the classroom ("Objective: students will summarize and retell a literary selection"):

https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=http://www.appsinclass.com/uploads/7/3/1/2/7312011/lesson_plan_for_implementing_TOONTASTIC_into_the_classroom.doc

TOONTASTIC can also be used by educators to create tutorials, explain projects, or even do morning reports.