In this chapter, we will go over storyboards and animatics, why they are useful to your project, and how to implement them into your production. Storyboards are the blueprint of your idea. They are used extensively for both live-action motion picture production and animation.

Previsualization is the first step in making your idea come to life—storyboards are that step. You may have an idea in your mind, just rough sketches on paper, or possibly even a full-length script. Animation can be a rather complex process, and it is advisable not to enter into it haphazardly, especially if you are dealing with a project of considerable size. Storyboarding will help you visualize your end goal.

There are numerous ways to go about creating storyboards. Drawing them is most common, although some have been created using basic 3-D animation or even still photographs. We’re talking about a 2-D Flash animated project here so drawing them would definitely be the best choice. You could draw your storyboard panels on paper or create them digitally, in Photoshop, CorelDRAW, or Flash itself.

An animatic is simply the separate storyboard images displayed in the proper sequence to tell the story. The images are placed on a timeline in Flash to make a rough edit of your project. This helps to determine exactly what your audience will be seeing and for how long it will be on the screen. You can even add a voice track (if your project has dialog) to determine the timing of spoken lines.