THE ANIMATION, VFX & GAMES CAREER MAP

Artist and character-animation roles across 2D and 3D: pay, demand, tools, and studios.

YELLOWBRICK

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YOUR PLACE IN ANIMATION, VFX AND GAMES

Studios hire for the craft, and they hire from reels. Whether you are trying to break in or you are already on a team and aiming for the next seniority band, the same things move you forward: knowing which roles are growing, what they pay, the tools each one runs on, and the work you need to show. This map lays that out role by role, so your next move is a decision you make with evidence instead of guesswork. It is a competitive field, and the tools keep changing fast. That is not a reason to hesitate. It is the reason craft and a credential matter more at every stage, because the artists who keep learning are the ones who keep getting hired. Use the profiles ahead to find where you fit and what to build next.

WHAT EACH PROFILE GIVES YOU

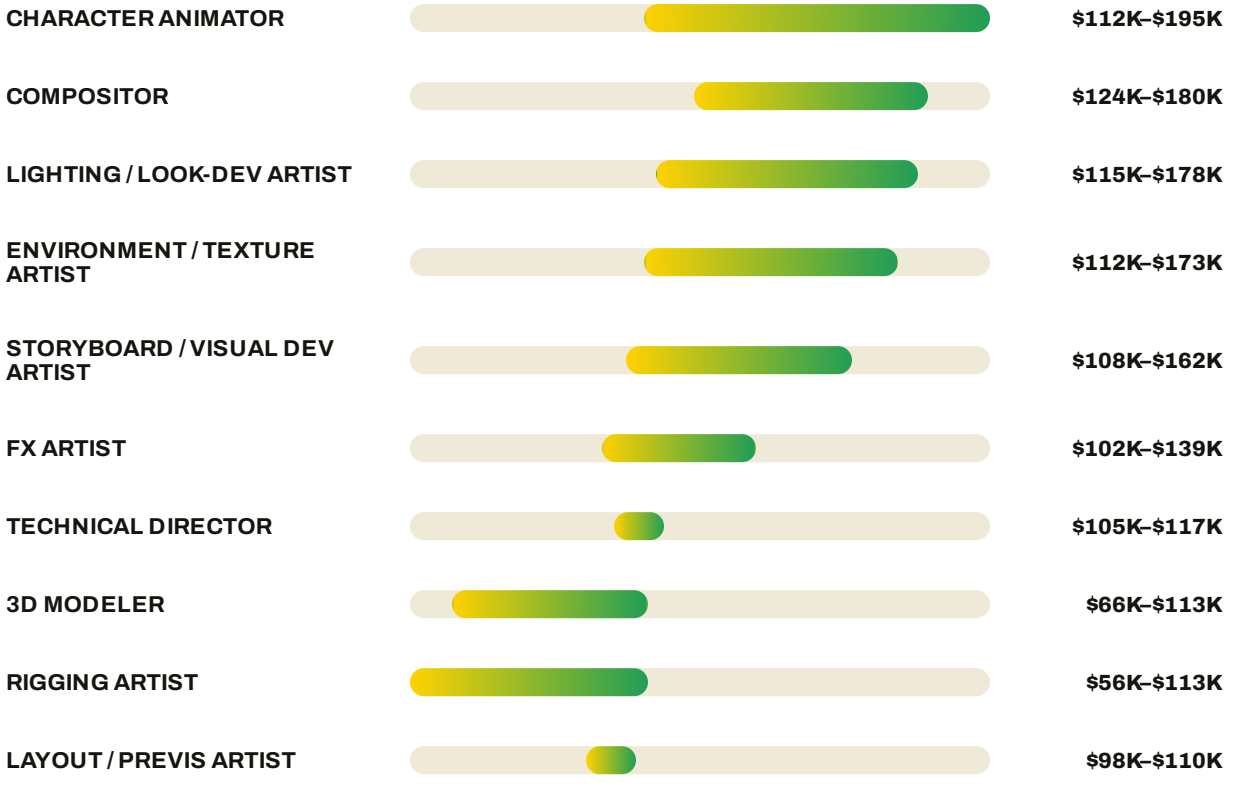
1. **COMPENSATION**: What the role pays from entry to senior, drawn from current studio job ads and grounded on government wage data. Real numbers you can plan a move around.
2. **DEMAND**: Where the hiring is heading, so you target roles with room to grow into.
3. **AI EXPOSURE**: What technology is changing in the work and what stays the artist's call, so you build skills that last.
4. **SKILLS AND TOOLS**: The software and the craft the role hires for, plus the ones that keep you competitive as you advance.
5. **YOUR NEXT MOVE**: One concrete step whether you are entering or leveling up, and the credential that closes the gap.

START HERE

EARNINGS AT A GLANCE

This page sets the stage before the role profiles. It shows the pay range for each role in this guide, from a typical entry point to a senior level, so you can see how the field is shaped overall before you read any single role in depth. Read it as a map, not a ranking. Each bar covers one role's own range, drawn from current US job ads and US government wage data, and the roles sit in different parts of the field, so the bars are not meant to be lined up against each other. Use them to find where your interests and your earning goals overlap, then turn to those role pages.

Roles in this guide range from about $56K at entry to $195K and up at senior.



These figures come from current US job postings (as of June 2026), gathered across many independent employers, not from Yellowbrick. Pay varies by region, employer, and experience, is not guaranteed, and is specific to each role, so the ranges are not comparable from one role to the next.

CHARACTER ANIMATOR

ROLE 01

You breathe life into characters, translating script and emotion into movement that audiences feel in their bones. From game cutscenes to animated features, your work is the difference between a puppet and a person. This is craft with real creative stakes.

1 · COMPENSATION

BASIS: Disclosed industry postings, all employers (n=37, 23 companies)

2 · DEMAND

★ Active hiring

Based on current job-posting activity for this role. This occupation's U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) projection is shared across the roles in this guide, so we report visible hiring activity now rather than a shared trend.

3 · AI EXPOSURE

LOW–MODERATE

AUTOMATING

In-between frame generation, texture/lighting setup, scanning and image conversion

STAYS HUMAN

Character performance judgment, narrative storytelling, creative direction of motion

IN PRACTICE: AI-assisted pose suggestions and motion cleanup tools help animators iterate faster, but nuanced performance and emotional timing remain firmly human-led.

4 · CORE SKILLS

Python | Unreal Engine | Maya | Acting / performance | Body mechanics

FUTURE-PROOF SKILLS

Body mechanics & acting performance | Real-time / game-engine animation

EXAMPLE EMPLOYERS HIRING

Epic Games | Naughty Dog | DNEG

Illustrative examples drawn from recent US job postings, not an endorsement or a guarantee of current openings.

5 · YOUR MOVE

Build a reel showing range: creature walks, emotional dialogue scenes, and weight-driven action. Sharpen your acting instincts alongside your technical execution in Maya and Unreal Engine.

YOUR NEXT STEP →

ROLE 02

LIGHTING / LOOK-DEV ARTIST

You sculpt the mood of entire worlds, shaping light, shadow, and surface to make animated scenes feel alive and believable. Every frame that moves an audience passes through your hands. This is craft at the intersection of art and technical precision, and studios need people who can do both.

1 · COMPENSATION

BASIS: Disclosed industry postings, all employers (n=33, 17 companies)

2 · DEMAND

★ Active hiring

Based on current job-posting activity for this role. This occupation's U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) projection is shared across the roles in this guide, so we report visible hiring activity now rather than a shared trend.

3 · AI EXPOSURE

LOW–MODERATE

AUTOMATING

Basic lighting presets, texture generation, scan conversion, config control

STAYS HUMAN

Artistic judgment on light, mood, shadow storytelling, and look-dev taste

IN PRACTICE: AI-assisted denoising and light sampling now speed up render iterations, but artistic judgment over mood and material remains firmly human work.

4 · CORE SKILLS

Houdini · Python · Katana · RenderMan · Lighting

FUTURE-PROOF SKILLS

Physically-based & real-time lighting · USD look-dev pipelines

EXAMPLE EMPLOYERS HIRING

DNEG · Rodeo FX · Naughty Dog

5 · YOUR MOVE

Build a reel showing full scene lighting and surface work across varied environments and moods, then deepen your command of Katana, a node-based lighting pipeline tool, and RenderMan, a physically based renderer.

YOUR NEXT STEP →

3D MODELER

You build the creatures, environments, and objects that make virtual worlds feel real. As a 3D Modeler, your meshes and sculpts are the foundation every animator, lighter, and effects artist builds on. This is craft with consequence.

1 · COMPENSATION

BASIS: Disclosed industry postings, all employers (n=22, 14 companies)

2 · DEMAND

→ **Stable**

Hiring for skilled 3D Modelers holds steady across games, film, and streaming platforms, keeping experienced artists in consistent demand.

3 · AI EXPOSURE

MODERATE

AUTOMATING

Geometry generation, texture synthesis, optical scanning conversion

STAYS HUMAN

Creative direction, character artistry, narrative storyboarding judgment

IN PRACTICE: AI tools can auto-generate base meshes or texture suggestions, so modelers spend more time refining and art-directing than blocking out from scratch.

4 · CORE SKILLS

Houdini · ZBrush · Maya · Topology · UV mapping

FUTURE-PROOF SKILLS

Hard-surface & organic modeling · Real-time-ready topology · AI-assisted tooling

EXAMPLE EMPLOYERS HIRING

Wētā FX · Rodeo FX · DreamWorks Animation

5 · YOUR MOVE

Build a portfolio piece that shows clean topology and polished UV mapping across a hero asset, from blockout to final render. Sharpening your sculpting precision and your grasp of production pipelines makes you a stronger candidate at every level.

YOUR NEXT STEP →

RIGGING ARTIST

You build the skeleton beneath the skin, creating the joint systems and controls that let animators breathe life into characters. Without a rigger, nothing moves. This is technical artistry at its finest, where logic and creativity are inseparable.

1 · COMPENSATION

BASIS: Disclosed industry postings, all employers (n=32, 20 companies)

2 · DEMAND

→ **Stable**

Rigging Artists hold steady demand across film, games, and streaming platforms, where character-driven content keeps studios staffed with skilled technical artists.

3 · AI EXPOSURE

LOW–MODERATE

AUTOMATING

Basic mesh binding, weight map generation, and motion simulation setup

STAYS HUMAN

Creative judgment in joint placement, deformation problem-solving, and character performance

IN PRACTICE: AI-assisted skinning tools can propose initial weight distributions, but riggers still audit, correct, and refine every joint influence by hand.

4 · CORE SKILLS

Blender · Maya · Rigging · Python · Skinning & weighting

FUTURE-PROOF SKILLS

Procedural / auto-rigging · Python rigging tools

EXAMPLE EMPLOYERS HIRING

Rodeo FX · Industrial Light & Magic

5 · YOUR MOVE

Build a demo reel featuring a character rig with clean weight painting and a custom control interface. Sharpen your Python scripting to automate repetitive rig tasks and set yourself apart at any level.

YOUR NEXT STEP →

ANIMATION, VFX & GAMES

COMPOSITOR

ROLE 05

You blend CGI and live action into seamless images that audiences never question. As a compositor, you are the final eye before a shot locks, combining layers, light, and color into one convincing reality. This work is technical, creative, and essential to every major production pipeline.

1 · COMPENSATION

$124K	$131K	$180K+
ENTRY	MID	SENIOR

BASIS: Disclosed industry postings, all employers (n=12, 7 companies)

2 · DEMAND

→ **Stable**

Compositors are consistently sought across film, streaming platforms, and games studios, with steady hiring that rewards depth of craft and technical range.

3 · AI EXPOSURE

MODERATE

AUTOMATING

Rotoscoping, color matching, and basic layer compositing

STAYS HUMAN

Narrative judgment, lighting artistry, and creative scene integration

IN PRACTICE: AI-assisted rotoscoping and masking tools can accelerate tedious isolation tasks, letting compositors focus on the judgment calls that software still cannot.

4 · CORE SKILLS

Python · C++ · Nuke · Compositing · Keying & color

FUTURE-PROOF SKILLS

USD & deep compositing · Real-time compositing · AI-assisted tooling

EXAMPLE EMPLOYERS HIRING

DNEG · Industrial Light & Magic · Framestore

5 · YOUR MOVE

Build a reel that shows clean keying, believable integration, and color work across varied shot types. Sharpening your Python scripting alongside compositing fluency opens senior pipeline roles.

YOUR NEXT STEP →

FX ARTIST

You build the fire, the floods, the explosions that make audiences gasp. As an FX Artist, you craft physics-driven simulations that give animated worlds their raw, visceral energy. This is technical artistry at its finest, and productions cannot ship without it.

1 · COMPENSATION

$102K	$110K	$139K+
ENTRY	MID	SENIOR

BASIS: Disclosed industry postings, all employers (n=15, 10 companies)

2 · DEMAND

→ **Stable**

Hiring for FX Artists holds steady across film, games, and streaming platforms, keeping skilled candidates in a strong position.

3 · AI EXPOSURE

LOW–MODERATE

AUTOMATING

Basic texture generation, scan conversion, and motion simulation setup

STAYS HUMAN

Creative judgment, narrative staging, and lifelike character craft

IN PRACTICE: AI-assisted tools can help iterate on simulation parameters faster, but the artist still drives every creative and technical decision.

4 · CORE SKILLS

Houdini · Python · FX simulation · VEX · Rendering

FUTURE-PROOF SKILLS

Procedural FX (Houdini) · **Real-time / GPU simulation**

EXAMPLE EMPLOYERS HIRING

DNEG · **DreamWorks Animation** · **Laika**

5 · YOUR MOVE

Build a simulation reel that showcases destruction, fluid, or pyro work, something recruiters can immediately evaluate. Sharpen your VEX scripting and Python skills to stand out at any level.

YOUR NEXT STEP →

ENVIRONMENT / TEXTURE ARTIST

You build the worlds people get lost in: every cracked stone, mossy wall, and sun-bleached terrain. As an Environment and Texture Artist, your work sets the visual tone for games and film alike. This is craft at scale, and the best in it are always in demand.

1 · COMPENSATION

$112K	$147K	$173K+
ENTRY	MID	SENIOR

BASIS: Disclosed industry postings, all employers (n=37, 23 companies)

2 · DEMAND

→ **Stable**

Hiring for skilled environment and texture artists remains consistent, with studios keeping specialist roles filled across games, film, and interactive media.

3 · AI EXPOSURE

MODERATE

AUTOMATING

Tiling textures, base mesh UV generation, and reference image scanning

STAYS HUMAN

Artistic judgment on surface storytelling, light, and material feel

IN PRACTICE: AI-assisted texture generation is entering the pipeline, helping artists iterate on surface variations faster while final art direction stays human.

4 · CORE SKILLS

Houdini · Python · Substance Designer · ZBrush · Texturing

FUTURE-PROOF SKILLS

Procedural texturing · Real-time / Unreal environments · AI-assisted tooling

EXAMPLE EMPLOYERS HIRING

Naughty Dog · Rodeo FX · Epic Games

5 · YOUR MOVE

Build a modular environment kit as your centerpiece portfolio piece, showing texture variation, material layering, and real-time performance. Deepen your procedural material work in tools like Substance Designer, a node-based material authoring tool, and sharpen your sculpting pipeline.

YOUR NEXT STEP →

LAYOUT / PREVIS ARTIST

ROLE 08

You block the shot before it exists, placing cameras, staging action, and solving storytelling problems in 3D space so directors can see their vision before a single frame is rendered. Layout and previs artists are the bridge between script and screen.

1 · COMPENSATION

BASIS: Disclosed industry postings, all employers (n=8, 3 companies)

2 · DEMAND

→ **Stable**

Hiring in this specialty holds steady across animation studios, game developers, and visual effects houses, making it a reliable track for both newcomers and experienced artists.

3 · AI EXPOSURE

MODERATE

AUTOMATING

Scan conversion, typesetting, and basic motion simulation

STAYS HUMAN

Narrative judgment, cinematography choices, and creative scene planning

IN PRACTICE: AI-assisted camera suggestion tools are entering previs pipelines, helping artists rapidly prototype shot options before committing to a layout direction.

4 · CORE SKILLS

Adobe Photoshop | Maya | Camera & staging | Previsualization | Composition

FUTURE-PROOF SKILLS

Virtual production & real-time previs | **Cinematic camera language** | **AI-assisted tooling**

EXAMPLE EMPLOYERS HIRING

DreamWorks Animation | Rodeo FX | DNEG

5 · YOUR MOVE

Build a previs sequence that shows camera logic, scene staging, and shot continuity across at least three cuts. Strengthen your composition eye and your ability to pitch spatial ideas quickly.

YOUR NEXT STEP →

ROLE 09

STORYBOARD / VISUAL DEV ARTIST

You build the blueprint for every scene before a single frame is animated, translating scripts and concepts into vivid visual sequences that guide entire productions. This role puts your artistic instincts at the center of the creative process, where strong ideas become the foundation everyone else builds on.

1 · COMPENSATION

$108K	$115K	$162K+
ENTRY	MID	SENIOR

BASIS: Disclosed industry postings, all employers (n=36, 19 companies)

2 · DEMAND

→ **Stable**

Hiring for storyboard and visual development artists remains steady, with consistent need across animation studios, game developers, and streaming platforms.

3 · AI EXPOSURE

LOW–MODERATE

AUTOMATING

Frame interpolation, texture generation, and basic layout composition

STAYS HUMAN

Narrative judgment, character staging, and visual storytelling choices

IN PRACTICE: AI tools can generate rough compositional references, letting you evaluate and redirect visual direction faster during early concepting phases.

4 · CORE SKILLS

ZBrush · Storyboarding · Adobe Photoshop · Visual development · Concept art

FUTURE-PROOF SKILLS

Draftsmanship & visual storytelling · **Cinematic staging**

EXAMPLE EMPLOYERS HIRING

DreamWorks Animation · Naughty Dog · Framestore

5 · YOUR MOVE

Build a sequence-based portfolio that shows your storytelling logic, not just isolated images. Sharpening your visual development skills and earning a credential in 3D animation adds production fluency that moves you from artist to indispensable creative collaborator.

YOUR NEXT STEP →

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

You are the bridge between creative vision and technical reality, building the pipelines and tools that let entire studios animate at scale. When a production breaks, you fix it. When it needs to move faster, you design the system that makes it possible.

1 · COMPENSATION

BASIS: Disclosed industry postings, all employers (n=7, 5 companies)

2 · DEMAND

→ **Stable**

Hiring for this role remains steady, with studios consistently seeking technical directors who can own pipeline integrity across complex productions.

3 · AI EXPOSURE

MODERATE

AUTOMATING

Texture generation, motion simulation, image scanning and conversion

STAYS HUMAN

Creative direction, narrative judgment, storyboarding, and production leadership

IN PRACTICE: AI assists with procedural geometry generation and simulation caching, but a technical director still architects the pipeline logic that makes those outputs.

4 · CORE SKILLS

Python · Houdini · Pipeline development · C++ · Katana

FUTURE-PROOF SKILLS

Pipeline & USD engineering · **Python tool development** · **AI-assisted tooling**

EXAMPLE EMPLOYERS HIRING

Industrial Light & Magic · **Sony Pictures Imageworks** · **DNEG**

5 · YOUR MOVE

Build a pipeline tool or custom solver and document it publicly: that artifact speaks louder than any resume line. Deepen your Python and C++ fluency, then let a production credential back up the expertise you already bring to the table.

YOUR NEXT STEP →

AI IN THE ANIMATION CRAFT

AI in this field changes month to month. This page is a snapshot of where it stands now, not a forecast. Companies are adopting these tools to scale their work, while the people whose work trains them are contesting how they are used. Both forces shape the careers in this map.

> **Yellowbrick's stance is simple: stay informed to stay competitive. We report only what employers and the industry are doing in practice, so you can judge your next move for yourself.**

WHAT IS SHIFTING

Generative tools are taking on repeatable, high-volume tasks, which changes what a day's work is made of faster than it changes which roles exist.

WHAT STAYS YOURS

The parts that do not automate are what this map is built on: judgment, taste, relationships, and the authority to decide when something is good. Tools generate options; they cannot tell you which is right.

THE OPEN QUESTION

Consent and credit, whether training data was licensed and whether the people who made it share in what the tools earn. Courts, unions, and regulators are still deciding.

WHERE EARLY-CAREER SITS

Automation reaches entry-level tasks first, the rungs people use to break in. That makes a strong portfolio and a clear specialty matter more, not less.

HOW TO READ ANY AI HEADLINE IN THIS FIELD

1. Who benefits, and who carries the cost?
2. Is the use licensed and consented, or contested?
3. Does it automate a task, or replace a role?
4. Which skills does it make more valuable?

These examples illustrate the dynamics above and change as deals and cases resolve. Sources are numbered on the Sources and References page.

ADOPTION

Netflix acquired the AI filmmaking-tools company InterPositive to give its creators a broader set of generative-AI tools. [1]

Disney signed a three-year deal licensing more than 200 characters to OpenAI's Sora and agreed to invest in OpenAI. [2]

OBJECTION

Disney, Universal, and DreamWorks sued the AI image generator Midjourney, alleging it copied their works to train its models and to generate infringing images. [3]

A visual-effects supervisor quoted by Rest of World warned that if AI handles cleanup, relighting, and base compositing, entry-level roles are hit hardest. [4]

Whether you are breaking in or already on a team, your leverage is the same: build a body of work only you could make, and learn the tools well enough to bend them to it. That is how you stay the author of your career.

WHERE TO START

YOUR MOVE IN ANIMATION, VFX & GAMES

Wherever you are right now, breaking into animation, VFX, and games or leveling up inside it, the next step is the same: a reel and the craft to back it. The right programs give you both faster than figuring it out alone. Think of the programs listed below as a starting point rather than a finish line: a structured way to build the reel, the craft, and the contacts that the roles in this guide ask for.

- **Breaking in? Start with a program below to build core craft and a portfolio-ready reel.**
- **Already working? Add the tools and credential that move you up a seniority band and keep you in demand.**
- **Either way, you come away with reel-ready work, a recognized certificate, and a network of studios hiring across this map.**

PROGRAMS IN THIS GUIDE

01 **3D Character Animation** ANIMATION MENTOR

02 **Game Character Animation** ANIMATION MENTOR

03 **Animation Industry Essentials** NYU TISCH

04 **This is Animation** SONY PICTURES ANIMATION

ANIMATION MENTOR

3D CHARACTER ANIMATION

Animation Mentor's 3D Character Animation Program is an 18-month online course sequence covering everything from Maya basics through advanced character performance. Students follow a structured path across seven courses, building skills progressively before moving on to more complex techniques. The program ends with a demo reel that students can use when applying for animation work.

WHAT STANDS OUT

- **18-month structured curriculum across seven courses**
- **Taught by working animation professionals through personal mentorship**
- **Suitable for beginners starting with no prior Maya experience**

WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

Students learn to use Autodesk Maya, develop body mechanics and acting skills, and assemble a demo reel that reflects what they have built throughout the program.

> *Maps to in this guide: Character Animator.*

EXPLORE THE PROGRAM →

SCAN TO EXPLORE

ANIMATION MENTOR

GAME CHARACTER ANIMATION

This online program from Animation Mentor teaches 3D character animation with a focus on games and real-time engines. The curriculum moves from Maya fundamentals and body mechanics through game-specific courses covering interactive gameplay, dynamic action, combat, and cinematic cutscenes. Students work in both Autodesk Maya and Unreal Engine throughout the program.

WHAT STANDS OUT

- **Six-course sequence from animation basics to cinematic cutscenes**
- **Hands-on work in Maya and Unreal Engine**
- **Personalized mentorship from industry animators**

WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

Students build and refine character animations in Maya, then bring them into Unreal Engine to create interactive gameplay sequences, action and combat animations, and in-game cutscenes.

> *Animate for games and real-time engines, the exact craft studios hire game animators for.*

EXPLORE THE PROGRAM →

SCAN TO EXPLORE

NYU TISCH

ANIMATION INDUSTRY ESSENTIALS

Animation Industry Essentials is a fully online program developed with NYU Tisch School of the Arts that covers the history, principles, and business of the animation industry alongside both 2D and 3D production pipelines. The program is made up of five self-paced modules, each three to five hours long, taught by NYU faculty and professional animators. It is designed for anyone looking to understand how the animation industry works across film, television, and video games.

WHAT STANDS OUT

- **Five self-paced online modules with one year of access**
- **NYU Tisch School of the Arts non-credit certificate upon completion**
- **Instruction from working animators across film, TV, and games**

WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

Students explore animation history and core principles, study 3D software such as Maya and Blender, trace the modern production pipeline, and examine career and industry trends through real-world case studies.

> *Maps to in this guide: 3D Modeler, Rigging Artist, Environment / Texture Artist, Technical Director.*

EXPLORE THE PROGRAM →

SCAN TO EXPLORE

SONY PICTURES ANIMATION

THIS IS ANIMATION

This is Animation is a free online course produced with Sony Pictures Animation and Sony Pictures Imageworks that gives you access to the animation production process from start to finish. Instructors are working professionals from both studios, covering roles across creative, production, technology, and business functions. The course is open to anyone at least 13 years old and is available entirely online.

WHAT STANDS OUT

- **Free to access, no cost to enroll**
- **Certificate of completion awarded at the end**
- **Suits people with creative, logistical, or business-minded interests in animation**

WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

You follow the animation production pipeline, take exercises designed to build practical skills, and hear directly from Sony professionals working across departments.

> *Maps to in this guide: Compositor, FX Artist, Lighting / Look-Dev Artist, Layout / Previs Artist, Storyboard / Visual Dev Artist.*

EXPLORE THE PROGRAM →

SCAN TO EXPLORE

ABOUT THE DATA

HOW WE BUILT THIS

This page explains how the guide is built and where each number comes from. Pay is drawn from current US job ads and US government wage data; demand, skills, and the companies hiring come from those same job ads. Every figure traces to a named source, and the guide is reviewed by qualified people before publication. The full source list and references are on the Sources and References page at the back. Data current as of June 2026.

01 **Pay.** Each range is the pay shown in current US job ads for that role, gathered from many employers. Where ads do not show enough pay, we use US government wage data instead, from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (the federal agency that tracks pay). If we cannot ground a role's pay either way, we leave that role out rather than guess.

02 **Demand.** Whether hiring is growing, steady, or cooling, based on how many ads we see and US government job-growth projections. When there is not enough to call a direction, we say so and show how active hiring is right now instead.

03 **Skills and employers.** The tools and skills each role hires for, and the example employers, come from recent job ads. They show what the market is asking for; they are not official statistics.

04 **AI exposure.** A plain read of what the technology is changing in the role and what stays human, based on the standard list of tasks each job involves.

05 **Review.** This guide draws on several current sources and was reviewed by qualified people before it shipped.

KEY TERMS

USD pipelines: Universal Scene Description, the open standard for passing 3D scenes between tools.

Real-time / Unreal: Game-engine rendering (such as Unreal Engine) fast enough to see and adjust images live, rather than waiting on a render.

Virtual production: Filming actors against real-time game-engine backgrounds, often on LED stages.

Previs: Previsualization: rough animated camera and staging blocked out before final production.

Look-dev: Look development: defining how a model's surfaces and shading read on screen.

Procedural: Building art with adjustable rules and node graphs rather than entirely by hand.

Topology: How a 3D model's polygon mesh is laid out, which governs how cleanly it deforms.

Body mechanics: The weight, balance, and physics of how a character moves.

AI-assisted tooling: Using generative-AI features built into the role's existing software.

Houdini: A node-based 3D application specialized in effects and procedural work.

Katana: A lighting and look-development application used in VFX pipelines.

RenderMan: Pixar's production renderer for final-quality images.

WHERE OUR INFORMATION COMES FROM

SOURCES & REFERENCES

Every figure in this guide traces to a named source. The data sources below feed the pay, demand, skills, and hiring signals throughout the guide; the references support the claims on the AI page.

DATA SOURCES

US Bureau of Labor Statistics, via CareerOneStop: government wage data and job-growth projections. We use these to ground pay where job ads do not show enough, and to read demand.

O*NET: the US government's catalog of what each occupation does. It grounds the skills and the AI-exposure read.

TheirStack: a database of current job ads. It drives the pay ranges, the example employers, and the in-demand skills.

Pay ranges are role-specific and reflect each role's own market, so they are not directly comparable from one role to the next. The full note on the pay figures is on the earnings page.

Where neither job ads nor government data fits a role, pay is researched from third-party, methodology-backed sources and checked by people before it appears, never published automatically.

The AI page lists its own sources, used only for the claims on that page, not for the pay figures here.

AI PAGE REFERENCES (INDEPENDENTLY VERIFIED)

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