

# How Much is it Gonna Cost and How Fast Can You Get it Done?

Ahhh, the age old questions. I don't know how many times I've heard this during my career. Every freelance job, it's the same thing. Sometimes it's sprinkled with the additional "Oh, and I don't have much of a budget." "Gimme a ballpark figure on what you think it'll cost." they'll ask you right on the spot. Right now, do the math and give me a figure. Then they suck air through their teeth, "Oooooo, that's pretty high, not within my budget" or the ever glamorous, "I can get my nephew to do it for less."

So how much do you think you're worth? Minimum wage for flipping a burger or emptying a wastebasket is \$10.25 per hour. You have a "skill". Gotta be worth at least double that: \$20.00 an hour.

So, what's the job? Let's start with a single "spot cartoon" in black and white? How long will it take you to draw it in rough and then clean it up in final black line with marker? 1 1/2 hours? That's \$30.00 please. What if you need to do it in colour? Add another 20 minutes to do a quick flood-fill job - that's \$37.00. You want shading? Add another 40 minutes and it's now \$50.00. Corporate Illustration?? Multiply that by 5 = \$250.00. Advertisement? \$500.00 to start. Corporate safety poster? \$2500.00.

The neighbor down the street needs a personalized birthday card for his kid's 8th birthday... can you draw Sponge Bob? \$500.00... I don't think so! Try maybe \$20.00 tops.

How about a caricature? I'm not paying any more than \$25.00 for that!

What about animation? Now there's a special skill!

I need a 20 second colour bumper for a video. Or how about 4 minutes of animation for a pitch? What'll it cost me... just give me a ball park.

Well?

Not very good at math huh?

You're gonna get sooooo burned!

Let's do some math, o.k?

First there are 24 frames per second and we usually do 12 drawings shot on twos.

How long does it take you to do one drawing? It depends on how complex the character is, right? "Pencil mileage". How many lines does it take to draw the character and how long does it take to draw each line?

Well, let's just see: I'll do two different characters; one fairly simple and the second a bit more complex. First I'll draw them in rough and time myself, then I'll go back over them and clean them up and time that. You can do the same thing by using a couple of your own characters, or try copying mine. Time yourself to see how long it takes you. You're the one that really matters here.

Simple Rough Drawing  
(1 min 40 sec)



Simple Clean Up  
(3 min 50 sec)



Complex Rough Drawing  
(2 min 55 sec)



Complex Clean Up  
(5 min)



So, the total time spent on the simple character was 5 min 30 seconds for 53 lines and on the more complex character, it took almost 8 minutes for the 122 lines (I counted each major change in direction as a line).

We'll do three different calculations here: 6 min per drawing, 8 min per drawing and 10 min per drawing.

### Equation #1 - 6 min per drawing = 10 drawings per hour

If you were to work 5 days a week:

	8 hrs/day 40 hrs/week (per day) 80 drawings	6 hrs/day 30 hrs/week 60 drawings	4 hrs/day 20 hrs/week 40 drawings	2 hrs/day 10 hrs/week 20 drawings
<b>5 sec</b> (60 drwgs)	3/4 day	1 day	1 1/2 days	3 days
<b>10 sec</b> (120 drwgs)	1 1/2 days	2 days	3 days	6 days (1 week)
<b>15 sec</b> (180 drwgs)	2 1/4 days	3 days	4 1/2 days	9 days
<b>20 sec</b> (240 drwgs)	3 days	4 days	6 days (1 week)	12 days (2 weeks)
<b>30 sec</b> (360 drwgs)	4 1/2 days	6 days	9 days	18 days (3 weeks)
<b>1 min</b> (720 drwgs)	9 days	12 days (2 1/2 weeks)	18 days (3 weeks)	36 days (7 weeks)
<b>2 min</b> (1440 drwgs)	18 days (3 1/2 weeks)	24 days (5 weeks)	36 days (7 weeks)	72 days (14 weeks) (3.5 mths)
<b>3 min</b> (2160 drwgs)	27 days (5 weeks)	36 days (7 weeks)	54 days (11 weeks)	108 days (21 weeks) (5.5 mths)
<b>4 min</b> (2880 drwgs)	36 days (7 weeks)	48 days (10 weeks)	72 days (14 weeks)	144 days (24 weeks) (6.5 mths)

## Equation #2 - 8 min per drawing = 7 drawings per hour

If you were to work 5 days a week:

	8 hrs/day 40 hrs/week (per day)	6 hrs/day 30 hrs/week	4 hrs/day 20 hrs/week	2 hrs/day 10 hrs/week
	56 drawings	42 drawings	28 drawings	14 drawings
<b>5 sec</b> (60 drwgs)	1 day	1 1/4 days	2 days	4 days
<b>10 sec</b> (120 drwgs)	2 days	2 1/2 days	4 days	8 days (1 1/2 weeks)
<b>15 sec</b> (180 drwgs)	3 days	3 3/4 days	6 days	12 days
<b>20 sec</b> (240 drwgs)	4 days	5 days	8 days (1 1/2 weeks)	16 days (2 weeks)
<b>30 sec</b> (360 drwgs)	6 days	7 1/2 days	12 days	24 days (3 weeks)
<b>1 min</b> (720 drwgs)	12 days	15 days (3 weeks)	24 days (5 weeks)	48 days (9 1/2 weeks)
<b>2 min</b> (1440 drwgs)	24 days (5 weeks)	30 days (6 weeks)	48 days (9 1/2 weeks)	96 days (19 weeks) (4.5 mths)
<b>3 min</b> (2160 drwgs)	36 days (7 weeks)	45 days (9 weeks)	72 days (14 weeks)	144 days (28 weeks) (6.5 mths)
<b>4 min</b> (2880 drwgs)	48 days (9 1/2 weeks)	60 days (12 weeks)	96 days (19 weeks)	192 days (38 weeks) (9 mths)

### Equation #3 - 10 min per drawing = 6 drawings per hour

If you were to work 5 days a week:

	8 hrs/day 40 hrs/week (per day) 48 drawings	6 hrs/day 30 hrs/week 36 drawings	4 hrs/day 20 hrs/week 24 drawings	2 hrs/day 10 hrs/week 12 drawings
<b>5 sec</b> (60 drwgs)	1 1/4 days	2 1/4 days	2 1/2 days	5 days
<b>10 sec</b> (120 drwgs)	2 1/2 days	4 1/2 days	5 days (1 week)	10 days
<b>15 sec</b> (180 drwgs)	3 3/4 days	6 3/4 days	7 1/2 days	15 days
<b>20 sec</b> (240 drwgs)	5 days	9 days (1 1/2 weeks)	10 days (2 weeks)	20 days
<b>30 sec</b> (360 drwgs)	7 1/2 days	13 1/2 days	15 days (3 weeks)	30 days (1.5 mths)
<b>1 min</b> (720 drwgs)	15 days (3 weeks)	27 days (5 1/2 weeks)	30 days (6 weeks)	60 days (3 mths)
<b>2 min</b> (1440 drwgs)	30 days (6 weeks)	54 days (11 weeks)	60 days (12 weeks) (3 mths)	120 days (6 mths)
<b>3 min</b> (2160 drwgs)	45 days (9 weeks)	81 days (16 1/2 weeks)	90 days (18 weeks) (4.25 mths)	240 days (8.5 mths)
<b>4 min</b> (2880 drwgs)	60 days (12 weeks)	108 days (22 weeks)	120 days (24 weeks) (5.5 mths)	360 days (1 year 3 mths)

So, that's how long it'll take you.

How much is each drawing in animation worth? If each one takes between 6 - 10 minutes, are they worth \$2.50 each? \$5.00? \$7.50... \$10.00??

(per drwg)	<b>FAST</b> 6 min per 10/ hr	<b>SLOW</b> 8 min per 7.5/ hr	<b>SLOWER</b> 10 min per 6 / hr	<b>SLOWEST</b> 12 min per 5 / hr
<b>\$1.00</b> (less than minimum wage)	\$10.00/hr	\$7.50/hr	\$6.00/hr	\$5.00/hr
<b>\$2.50</b>	\$25.00/hr	\$18.75/hr	\$15.00/hr	\$12.50/hr
<b>\$5.00</b>	\$50.00/hr	\$37.50/hr	\$30.00/hr	\$25.00/hr
<b>\$7.50</b>	\$75.00/hr	\$56.25/hr	\$45.00/hr	\$37.50/hr
<b>\$10.00</b>	\$100.00/hr	\$75.00/hr	\$60.00/hr	\$50.00/hr

	<b>\$2.50</b> \$30.00/sec	<b>\$5.00</b> \$60.00/sec	<b>\$7.50</b> \$90.00/sec	<b>\$10.00</b> \$120.00/sec
<b>5 sec</b>	\$150.00	\$300.00	\$450.00	\$600.00
<b>10 sec</b>	\$300.00	\$450.00	\$900.00	\$1,200.00
<b>15 sec</b>	\$450.00	\$900.00	\$1,350.00	\$1,800.00
<b>20 sec</b>	\$600.00	\$1,200.00	\$1,800.00	\$2400.00
<b>30 sec</b>	\$900.00	\$1,800.00	\$2,700.00	\$3,600.00
<b>1 min</b>	\$1,800.00	\$3,600.00	\$5400.00	\$7,200.00
<b>2 min</b>	\$3,600.00	\$7,200.00	\$10,800.00	\$14,400.00
<b>3 min</b>	\$5,400.00	\$10,800.00	\$16,200.00	\$21,600.00
<b>4 min</b>	\$7,200.00	\$14,400.00	\$21,600.00	\$28,800.00

Now when someone comes knocking on your door and asks you to do 1 minute of animation you can quote them between \$1,800.00 and \$7,200.00.

Of course their response will be, "Oh, I was hoping to only spend around \$150.00 on this." and you may respond back to them any way you want.

I hope this will give you a clearer sense of time, effort and cost involved. Of course this only scratches the surface because it doesn't deal with all the different types of artwork involved such as concept design, character design, props, storyboarding, layout, posing, background painting and then all the technical stuff like scanning, image editing, compositing, colouring, sound edit, final edit and all those tiny miscellaneous things that need to be done here and there throughout the process.

Now, to really mess things up for you, if you work in a studio you might be on salary - a set amount each week possibly based on hours. Most studios employ a basic quota system where they give you a base pay (let's say \$500.00 a week to just show up and then they pay you per item that you create. For example, when I worked in layout I was actually working at two studios at the same time.

Studio A paid the \$500.00 base pay and then \$10.00 per layout with a quota of 10 layouts per day. If you met your quota you would get \$500.00 + 50 x \$10.00 (\$500.00) for a total of \$1000.00 per week. If you went over quota, you got \$25.00 per layout (a little incentive to work faster).

Studio B paid no base salary but they paid \$25.00 per layout with no minimum quota. So, if I did the exact same number of layouts as I did at Studio A (50) I would get paid \$1250.00.

So, at Studio A, I'd have to do an extra 10 layouts above quota to make the same amount. The layouts at Studio B were much easier to do and I typically did about 75 layouts each week there (it was actually at home each evening) so I was getting \$1875.00 compared to the \$1000. at studio A. I decided to quit studio A and work full time at Studio B where I was able to do about 150 layouts a week or \$3750.00. This gravy train only lasted about 6 weeks as the studio abruptly shut down one day without any notice and I ended up moving to Ottawa to work on Teddy Ruxpin for about a year and a half.

Each studio is different and each production is different with a budget that suits the style of the animation. Full animation is different from Flash animation which is different from computer animation.