Kennedy
ENG 6813
7/5/2026
Drs. Salter & Stanfill

Signature Assignment Draft
Context & Refinement Notes

This is effectively a "midterm assignment," to be delivered in weeks ten and elven before we begin preparing for our final rhetorical analysis papers. Prior to this assignment, students will have completed 9 weeks of weekly reflections on anime from the "Choose Your Own Adventure" weekly viewing options on our weekly theme, and we will have discussed some of the AI-related controversies in class pertaining to industry issues. Shout out to Emily Proulx, who reminded me that Knights Write Showcase exists, and that we're always begging upper-level students to submit posterboards. Having everyone make one in class is a great way to source these later on. For the purposes of this initial exercise, I've asked Claude to create some "examples" for me – one for, and one against. I haven't decided if I'll distribute these to students beyond showing them briefly in class. I don't want students to turn in this precise thing. I'm anticipating that my AI objectors will distinctly not want to use Claude or any other AI tool, but I'm also hoping for stylistic variety, seeing as I have so many Nicholson students registered.

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Drawing the Line: AI in the Anime Studio

Signature Assignment — Multimodal Argument (Research Poster + Position Reflection)

Course: ENC 3375: Rhetoric in Pop Culture (Anime) | **Weight:** [25] % of final grade
Poster + Reflection due: 11/1, by 11:59 P.M. by Canvas [Draft]
Poster + Reflection due: 11/8, by 11:59 P.M. by Canvas [Full Submission]

Assignment at a Glance

You will design a **researched academic poster** — built at full poster scale but delivered as a digital file you can share and display — that presents the strongest evidence-based arguments both *for* and *against* the use of artificial intelligence in the production of anime. You will pair it with a **2–4 page position reflection** in which you stop being neutral, take a side, and defend it with textual evidence.

The poster asks you to be a fair broker of a live scholarly controversy: to research it, organize it, and cite it so a reader can follow the evidence without you standing next to them. The reflection asks you to be an advocate. Holding both roles in one project is the point — you cannot argue a position well until you can represent the opposing one honestly and accurately.

What a Research Poster Is

A **research poster** is a scholarly genre. It communicates *researched analysis* to an informed audience, balances visual design with substantive text, and shows its sources on the page. Your poster will be organized into labeled sections, will display visible citations and a references block. Think “a single, well-designed page of public scholarship,” not “a flyer.” I have provided some examples (attached). You don’t have to be an artist to make a successful poster, although this is a great opportunity for those with design skills to show them off. Interested students will have a competitive submission for the Knights Write Showcase.

Why This Assignment Exists

Anime is in the middle of a real, unresolved fight about automation, labor, and art — an ideal case for us to test our mettle as rhetoricians. Here, we’ll make a multimodal argument laying out both sides of the argument before we take a side. You will gather, weigh, and synthesize credible sources, and make that research visible through on-poster citations, and then reflect on how you’ve come to the position you have. The throughline: rhetoric is the art of using available means to make and assess arguments responsibly — especially when the stakes are real, the audience is informed, and the answer is contested.

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Learning Outcomes

By completing this assignment, you will:

1. Compose within the conventions of a scholarly multimodal genre (the research poster).
2. Conduct and synthesize research on an emerging issue and make that research visible to a public-facing audience.
3. Represent a contested issue pertaining to pop culture (anime) fairly before advocating your position within that conversation.
4. Evaluate sources for credibility, bias, currency, and relevance.

The Controversy

Anime studios are already experimenting with AI across the production pipeline: automating *in-between* frames, generating or “painting” backgrounds, upscaling and restoring older footage, assisting with coloring and compositing, and translating or subtitling. Each use lands somewhere different on the spectrum from “helpful tool” to “threat to the craft.”

The debate tends to cluster around a handful of pressure points worth investigating. You can begin with these, but you may expand your poster to include more if you’d like:

- **Labor.** The industry is known for grueling schedules and low pay, especially for entry-level *dōga* (in-between) animators. Does automation relieve overworked artists, or eliminate the jobs where new animators learn the craft?
- **Artistry vs. efficiency.** Faster, cheaper production could enable more work and smaller studios, but critics argue it flattens distinctive styles and devalues human craft.
- **Training data and consent.** Generative models are often trained on existing artists’ work. Who consented? Who is compensated? Why does this matter?
- **Audience reception.** Specific releases that used AI-generated art or AI-assisted localization have drawn notable fan backlash
- **Preservation.** AI “upscaling” can restore aging anime that would otherwise degrade.

Your job is to find the *specific* statements, such as interviews with industry professionals, studio and labor union announcements, and social media posts that let you argue, rather than gesturing at “people say.”

Deliverable 1 — The Research Poster

You will create a balanced, well-sourced overview of the pros and cons of GenAI tools in anime production, in the genre of an academic research poster. The audience will be your

professor and your classmates. The poster should fairly argue both sides of the argument; your personal position is argued fully in the reflection. Let the poster represent the controversy; resolve it in the reflection.

Required Sections:

1. **Title block** — a title that frames the issue or poses the research question; your name; the course name
2. **Introduction / Background** — orient the reader to the AI-in-anime debate and state the **specific question** your poster investigates.
3. **The Case For** and **The Case Against** — the core. Each side presents **at least three researched, cited points**, written as specific evidence-based claims rather than vague labels. ("Automating in-between frames can return hours to low-paid animators" beats "Efficiency.")
4. **A visual / data element** — at least one **original** chart, annotated timeline, comparison table, or annotated image that conveys information *visually* rather than as a sentence.
5. **Discussion / Synthesis** — briefly characterize where the weight of evidence sits and what remains genuinely contested (e.g., the "labor shortage vs. exploitation" dispute). Synthesize; don't declare a winner.
6. **References** — a visible citations/Works Cited block listing your sources in the assigned style.

Content requirements

- **Balanced:** at least three pros and three cons, each a specific claim tied to **at least one cited source**.
- Distinguish **documented fact** from **interpretation/opinion** where it matters.
- Every claim traceable to a source; on-poster citations plus a References section.
- At least one piece of **quantitative or comparative** information represented visually.

Design requirements (academic-poster genre)

- A clear **sectioned, modular layout** (columns or a grid): readable at a glance, with section headers
- **Original layout.** Templates may scaffold, but the composition and content must be yours.

Format & tools

- Design at true poster dimensions — **recommended 36 × 24 in landscape** (48 × 36 in is also fine) — and confirm it remains legible on screen both fit-to-window and when zoomed.
- Submit as a **high-resolution PDF**
- Any tool is fine: PowerPoint or Google Slides (set a custom slide size), Canva, Adobe Illustrator/InDesign, Figma, or a GenAI tool of your choice. Tool choice is not graded; rhetorical and genre effectiveness is.

GenAI Parameters

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- You may use GenAI tools to help design and format your posterboards, but you should be mindful that you will need to double-check any research claims that these AI tools produce for hallucinations.
- All GenAI use must be disclosed in the reflection component of the deliverable.

Deliverable 2 — The Position Reflection (2–4 Pages)

This is **not** a neutral summary nor a personal journal entry. It is a short argumentative essay in which you take and defend a position, as well as reflect on how you built your poster.

Required moves

1. **Stake a claim.** Open with a clear thesis: do you support or oppose the integration of AI in anime production? “Conditional” positions are welcome but must be specific (e.g., “support for restoration and in-betweening, oppose for generative background art”)
2. **Argue with textual evidence.** Support your position with credible sources integrated as quotation, paraphrase, or summary. Every major reason should be tied to evidence, not assertion.
3. **Reflect on your poster creation process.** Devote roughly the last half-page to your poster choices: what tools did you use? Why? If you used any GenAI tools, what prompts did you use, and how did you use them? Did you fact-check any correctness about research claims they made?
4. **Disclose all GenAi use.** Even if you do not use any GenAI tools, you will need to state this as part of our commitment to technological disclosure.

Format

- 2–4 pages, double-spaced, 12-pt standard font, 1-inch margins.
- A works cited / references page in either MLA or APA this does not count toward the page total.
- A creative title that signals your position.

Research & Evidence Expectations

- **Minimum six credible sources** across the project (both the posterboard and reflection). Aim for a mix: at least one piece of journalism or industry reporting, one representing a creator/studio/labor perspective, and one that complicates your own position.
- Prioritize **primary and original sources** — studio statements, interviews, the actual release that caused a reaction.

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- **Evaluate** each source: Who made it? What's their interest? When was it published? You should be able to say why each cited source is trustworthy.
- Wikipedia, fan wikis, and AI chatbots may help you *find* sources but are not citable evidence themselves.

Milestones

Milestone	What's due	Date
Draft	Poster draft (all sections blocked in) + reflection outline, for peer review	11/1
Final submission	Polished poster and reflection	11/8
Optional Revision	Optional Revision to win back lost points	11/15

Submission Checklist

- ☐ Poster exported as high-res **PDF and PNG**
- ☐ All required sections present and labeled (title, intro/background, case for, case against, visual element, discussion, references)
- ☐ At least 3 researched pros and 3 cons, each tied to a cited source
- ☐ At least one piece of information shown **visually** (chart/timeline/table)
- ☐ On-poster citations + a visible **References** block
- ☐ Fact vs. interpretation distinguished where it matters
- ☐ Alt text / caption for the poster and its visual element
- ☐ Reflection, 2–4 pages, with a clear thesis taking a position
- ☐ Counterargument addressed; half-page reflection on your own design choices
- ☐ Works cited in the assigned style; **≥ 6 credible sources** across the project

Grading Rubric (100 Points)

Criterion	Description	Points
Argument & position	Reflection takes a clear, specific, defensible stance and sustains it.	20
Evidence & sourcing	Claims grounded in credible, well-integrated, properly cited sources; counterargument engaged honestly.	20

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Criterion	Description	Points
Poster — research framing & balance	Clear research question; fair, specific, well-sourced pros/cons; visual hierarchy guides the reader; argument legible at a glance and on close read.	10
Poster — design & academic-genre conventions	Effective sectioned/modular layout; contrast, alignment, proximity, repetition; consistent type/color; self-contained, accessible, with visible references.	10
Research quality & source evaluation	Sources are credible, current, and varied (≥ 6); source evaluation is evident; primary sources favored.	10
Reflection on design choices	Thoughtful account of how/why poster decisions were made and how they relate to the argument.	10
Mechanics & format	Meets length/format/poster-size specs; clear prose; correct citations.	20

A Few Tips

- **You will probably decide on your position early; keep the poster balanced anyway.** The tension between your private stance and your poster is exactly what the reflection should explore
- **Specificity wins.** “Threatens jobs” is a label; “risks eliminating *dōga* roles where animators traditionally train” is a researched claim.
- **Design for the digital reader.** Check that every section is legible on a laptop screen, both zoomed out and at full size.
- **Watch your layout for accidental bias.** Bigger headers, warmer colors, and top placement are arguments too. Notice when your design takes a side you meant to keep off the page.
- **Cite the moment, not the mood.** A datable studio announcement or a specific instance of audience reaction is stronger evidence than “fans were upset.”

Questions? Bring a draft to office hours and we’ll workshop it together.

Relief or Replacement?

Weighing AI’s Promise for an Overburdened Anime Industry

A research poster surveying the debate over AI in Japanese animation · Jordan Lee

Rhetoric & Writing Through Anime · Research Poster

Introduction & Background

Anime is a booming global art form, yet it runs on the labor of overworked, underpaid artists facing punishing schedules and a strained talent pipeline. As studios begin testing AI for backgrounds and in-between frames, supporters see a way to absorb the most mechanical work. This poster lays out the evidence on both sides.

RESEARCH QUESTION

Can AI tools relieve anime’s labor crisis and sustain production without displacing the artists who define the medium?

Approach

Synthesis of journalism, JAniCA/NAFCA wage surveys, creator interviews, and industry production reports (2016–2026).

The Case For

Eases brutal overwork

Some studios push animators into 80–100-hour workweeks; automating drudge tasks could return that time to artists.

[4]

Speeds repetitive labor

Interpolation tools such as CACANi report up to ~70% time savings on in-between frames.

[5][7]

Frees humans for authorial work

The director of Netflix’s AI short framed it as letting animators focus on what only humans can do.

[1]

Supports a squeezed industry

Proponents argue AI helps small studios survive thin margins and meet surging global demand.

[3]

The Case Against

“Labor shortage” is disputed

Researchers counter there is “no shortage of labor in animation” — the real issue is pay.

[1]

Breaks the training pipeline

Entry-level frame work is how newcomers learn the craft; automating it risks a skills gap.

[5][6]

Devalues human craft

Miyazaki called AI animation “an insult to life itself”; many see it eroding artistry.

[2]

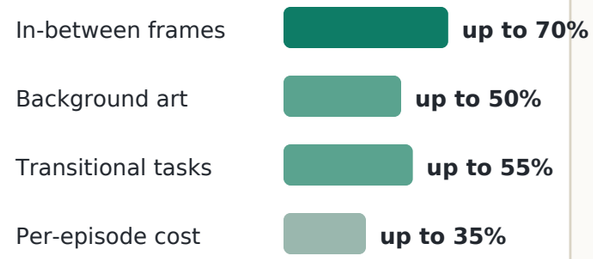
Consent & credit problems

Models are trained on artists’ work, often without consent, and human credit is frequently erased.

[1]

Reported efficiency gains

Industry / vendor-reported ranges — treat as claims, not audited figures. [5][7]



Discussion / Synthesis

The strongest objections target a business model, not the technology itself. Where AI automates drudgery under human direction — and pay, consent, and credit are protected — the evidence suggests it can ease overwork and help a financially strained industry survive. The risk of replacement is real but is best managed through fair wages and crediting, not by refusing useful tools.

References

[1] Deck, A. “Anime Artists Are Panicking over Netflix’s AI Experiment.” Rest of World, 2023.
[2] Loveridge, L. “Hayao Miyazaki Calls AI Animation ‘An Insult to Life Itself.’” Anime News Network, 2016.
[3] “Labor Challenges in Japan’s Anime Industry.” Nippon.com, 2025.
[4] “Anime’s Global Boom Runs on Poverty Wages.” Tokyo Weekender, 2025.
[5] “How AI Is Changing the Anime Production Pipeline (2026 Report).” EnjoyIP, 2026.
[6] “Japan’s Animation Industry Failing to Cultivate Next-Gen Talent.” Nippon.com.
[7] “Integration of AI Tools in Anime Production: Workflow Guide.” SmartNet Academy, 2026.

Studently Student

Professor Kennedy

ENC 3375

12/12/2026

Let the Machines Do the Drudgery: The Case for AI in Anime Production

The debate over AI in anime is usually staged as a fight between art and automation, but that framing hides what is actually at stake. The Japanese animation industry is not a pristine craft endangered by machines; it is a global business that has been quietly grinding down its own workers for decades. My poster places the strongest arguments on both sides next to one another. This reflection takes the position those arguments point me toward: the anime industry should embrace the proliferation of AI tools, because they can relieve a documented labor crisis and help sustain a financially strained art form. The objections worth taking seriously are real—but nearly all of them describe failures of pay and policy that predate AI, and that should be fixed directly rather than used as reasons to refuse useful tools.

Begin with the conditions AI would actually enter. Japanese animators are among the most overworked and underpaid skilled workers in any creative field. *Tokyo Weekender* reports that some studios push staff into eighty- to one-hundred-hour workweeks, with entry-level animators earning as little as ¥600 to ¥800 per hour—below Tokyo's minimum wage ("Anime's Global Boom"). This is not a healthy system that AI threatens to spoil; it is a system already in crisis. Any honest evaluation of new tools has to start from that baseline.

Against that baseline, the case for AI is straightforward. The most punishing work in animation is also the most mechanical: the in-between frames that connect an animator's key drawings. Interpolation software can automate much of it, with industry reports claiming time

savings of up to roughly seventy percent on this transitional labor (“Integration of AI Tools”). Used well, those recovered hours go back to the artist. The director of Netflix’s AI-assisted short described exactly this dynamic, framing the technology as a way to let animators focus on the work only humans can do (Deck). When a tool can absorb the drudgery that drives talented people out of the field, refusing it on principle is not a defense of artists—it is a defense of their exhaustion.

The strongest objections deserve a fair hearing, and my poster gives them one. Critics rightly note that entry-level frame work is how the next generation learns; even an optimistic industry report concedes that automating it risks a “training gap” (“How AI Is Changing”). Others object on grounds of craft: shown an AI animation in 2016, Hayao Miyazaki called it “an insult to life itself” (Loveridge). And there is a genuine consent problem, since many models are trained on artists’ work without permission. These are not trivial concerns, and a serious case for AI cannot wave them away.

But notice what each objection actually indicts. The training-gap worry is an argument for designing apprenticeship deliberately, not for preserving poverty-wage busywork as a teaching method. The consent problem is an argument for licensing and compensation, which industries address through law and contract, not through abstinence. Even Miyazaki’s objection, read closely, is to work made without care—not to every computer in the studio. None of these is an argument that artists are better off underpaid and overworked. The danger critics fear is real, but it lives in the business model—studios using automation as an excuse to hire fewer people and pay them less—not in the tools themselves. Ban the tools and that model simply continues by other means; the animator sleeping under a desk is no better off.

This is why I support proliferation rather than mere tolerance. AI will not fix anime's labor crisis on its own—pay, contracts, and credit have to be addressed directly, and the recent gains in animators' conditions show the industry can improve when it chooses to ("Labor Challenges"). But deployed alongside those reforms, AI is one of the few developments that can actually reduce the hours that are breaking people. The real question is not whether anime can keep AI out. It is whether the industry will pair these tools with the wages and protections that would let artists, and not just studios, reap the gains. I think it can, and that it should.

Building the poster disciplined an argument I came in already holding. Because I support AI, my instinct was to let the "Case For" column dominate; instead I gave both columns equal width, equal card counts, and equal sourcing, so the poster argues fairly even though I do not. My hardest choice was the central chart. I wanted a figure showing how AI relieves labor, but the honest data on efficiency comes from industry and vendor sources, so I labeled it plainly as reported claims rather than audited fact and let the reader weigh it. That caveat slightly weakens my own case—and including it was the point. The poster taught me that the most persuasive version of an argument is the one that has already conceded what it cannot prove.

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Craft, Labor & Consent

What Japanese Animation Stands to Lose to AI

A research poster surveying the debate over AI in Japanese animation · Sam Ortiz

Rhetoric & Writing Through Anime · Research Poster

Introduction & Background

Anime's global success rests on the labor of animators who are among the lowest-paid skilled workers in any creative field. As studios deploy AI for backgrounds and in-between frames, critics warn that proliferation threatens the jobs, the training pipeline, and the human craft the industry depends on. This poster lays out the evidence on both sides.

RESEARCH QUESTION

Does the spread of AI tools in anime threaten the labor, training, and craft that the industry depends on?

Approach

Synthesis of journalism, JAniCA wage and working-conditions surveys, creator statements, and industry reports (2016–2026).

The Case For

Eases brutal overwork

Some studios push animators into 80–100-hour workweeks; automating drudge tasks could return that time to artists.

[4]

Speeds repetitive labor

Interpolation tools such as CACANi report up to ~70% time savings on in-between frames.

[5][7]

Frees humans for authorial work

The director of Netflix's AI short framed it as letting animators focus on what only humans can do.

[1]

Supports a squeezed industry

Proponents argue AI helps small studios survive thin margins and meet surging global demand.

[3]

The Case Against

"Labor shortage" is disputed

Researchers counter there is "no shortage of labor in animation" — the real issue is pay.

[1]

Breaks the training pipeline

Entry-level frame work is how newcomers learn the craft; automating it risks a skills gap.

[5][6]

Devalues human craft

Miyazaki called AI animation "an insult to life itself"; many see it eroding artistry.

[2]

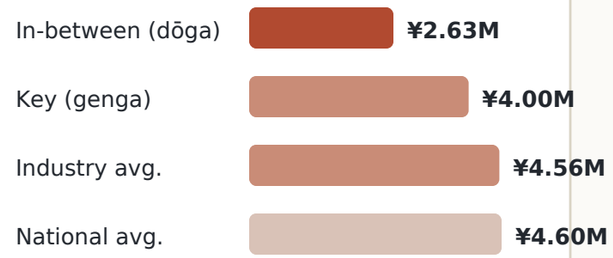
Consent & credit problems

Models are trained on artists' work, often without consent, and human credit is frequently erased.

[1]

Pay by animation role, 2023

Avg. annual income, Japan, 2023 (¥ millions). The most automatable roles are the lowest paid. [3]



Discussion / Synthesis

Recent gains in animators' pay and hours came from labor regulation, competition, and insourcing — not from AI [3]. Deployed as a cost-cut, AI removes the entry-level jobs where artists learn the craft and rests on uncredited work. The evidence suggests that proliferation, as currently practiced, deepens the very labor crisis it claims to solve.

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[1] Deck, A. "Anime Artists Are Panicking over Netflix's AI Experiment." Rest of World, 2023.
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Student McStudent

Professor Kennedy

ENC 3375

12/5/2026

An Insult to the Work: Why Anime Should Resist the Spread of AI

Defenders of AI in anime like to present it as a rescue: a struggling, overworked industry finally getting some relief. My poster shows why that story is seductive—and why it falls apart under scrutiny. This reflection takes the position the evidence pushed me toward: the Japanese animation industry should resist the proliferation of AI tools in production. Not because technology is inherently corrupting, but because, as AI is actually being deployed, it removes the jobs where artists are trained, rests on work taken without consent, and offers studios a way to avoid the one reform the industry truly needs—paying people. The "relief" it promises is mostly relief for budgets, not for animators.

Start with the justification AI's promoters lean on hardest. When Netflix released an AI-background short in 2023, it framed the experiment as a response to a labor shortage (Deck). But the premise is false. As one researcher quoted by Andrew Deck observed, there is "no shortage of labor in animation"; the field is full of trained, willing artists who simply cannot live on what studios pay. The numbers bear this out: entry-level animators can earn as little as ¥600 to ¥800 per hour, below minimum wage ("Anime's Global Boom"). The industry does not lack workers. It lacks the will to pay them. AI marketed as a fix for "shortage" answers a problem that does not exist while leaving the real one untouched.

What AI does instead is automate the bottom of the ladder. The Netflix short did not fill an empty chair; it targeted background artists, whom Deck identifies as especially exposed to

downsizing. That matters beyond any single job, because entry-level frame and background work is how newcomers learn the craft. Even a pro-AI industry report concedes that automating it risks a generational "training gap" ("How AI Is Changing"), and Japanese animation has long depended on senior artists teaching juniors on the job ("Japan's Animation Industry"). Cut the bottom rung and the pipeline that produces master animators erodes from below.

There is also the matter of where these systems come from. Generative models are typically trained on existing artists' drawings, frequently without consent or compensation—the work of the very people the tools then compete against. This is the deeper meaning behind Miyazaki's reaction when, shown an AI animation in 2016, he called it "an insult to life itself" (Loveridge). His objection is easy to caricature as nostalgia, but the principle is precise: animation is human expression, and a model that recombines scraped drawings cannot originate the feeling that gives the medium its value.

The strongest case for AI—and the reason this is a real dilemma—is humane: animators are overworked, and tools that automate drudgery could give them their time back. I take that seriously; no one defending exhausted artists wants them to stay exhausted. But the relief is conditional on a choice studios have not shown they will make. The evidence cuts against optimism: the genuine improvements in animators' pay and hours over the past decade came from labor regulation, competition for talent, and studios bringing work in-house—not from automation ("Labor Challenges"). When the same firms adopt AI, they have every incentive to bank the savings rather than pass them on. A tool that could relieve overwork in a fair system becomes, in this one, a way to do the same work with fewer paid people.

Resisting proliferation does not mean smashing every machine. It means refusing to let "efficiency" substitute for the reforms the industry keeps avoiding, and refusing to build the

future of a human art on uncredited human labor. The path that has actually improved animators' lives is unglamorous—regulation, fair contracts, in-house hiring—and it works. Anime does not need to automate its artists to survive; it needs to pay them. Until the incentives change, the spread of AI in production will deepen the crisis it claims to cure, and the industry would do better to hold the line.

Designing the poster forced me to argue against myself in public. Holding a clear position, I was tempted to stack the "Case Against" column and let the "Case For" look thin; instead I gave both sides equal space, equal sourcing, and genuinely strong claims, because a case that only survives against a weak opponent is not worth much. My sharpest design decision was the central chart: I chose the wage data showing in-between animators earning far below the national average, because it makes my point with documented fact rather than rhetoric. I had to resist captioning it in a way that editorialized, letting the numbers and a neutral note carry the weight. The exercise clarified that the honest way to win a reader is to show them the other side fairly and trust the evidence—not to hide it.

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