ACTIVITY 3

REPRODUCIBLE MASTER

SOUND EFFECTS

A lot of what you see in a movie has been faked for the camera. Actors fighting onscreen, for instance, do not hit each other very hard, so the sound of their punches must be created by the sound effects crew. Dialogue is the only sound recorded while the movie is being filmed; all other sounds are added later.

Footsteps, breathing, the rustle of clothing and the sound of props, such as computer keys or squeaky chairs, are created on a Foley stage named for Jack Foley, longtime member of Universal Studios' sound effects department. "Foley" is performed while watching the projected film and is sometimes called "walking Foley" because footsteps are such an important part of the process. Car engines, explosions and other mechanical sounds are considered sound effects and are added by the sound effects editor, who either manufactures them in the recording studio, retrieves them from a sound library or specially records them in the real world. Although the sound effects editor may record the actual sounds of the objects onscreen, often he or she must come up with more creative solutions. To produce the whine of alien space ships in *Independence Day,* for instance, the sound crew used a recording of screaming baboons.

Simple materials can be used to create many sound effects. Cellophane being crumpled sounds like fire, while crunched up Life Savers could be small bones breaking. What other materials at home or at school can you use to make sound effects? Remember to think creatively. The most obvious sound is not always the best.

Foley artists Pamela Kahn and Vincent Giusetti create splash effects on a Foley stage while the film plays on a television monitor.

How would you create the sound of something that had never been heard by humans, such as a dinosaur?

Write a short scene or take a scene from a story or a book. Using some effects you and your classmates have discovered, put together the sound effects for the story. Try to include natural sounds, human sounds, location sounds and mechanical sounds.

SOUND EFFECTS TERMS:

PROP: Any object, such as cups, guns, furniture or books, needed to make a scene more realistic.

SOUND LIBRARY: A collection of recordings of different sounds—natural, mechanical and environmental. Many sound professionals maintain their own libraries or rent from commercial libraries.

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