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Before We Read

MY LEARNING GOALS

I can
- ○ tell what I know about sound effects.
- ○ recall important details.

Movie Sound Effects

Is it the flapping of gloves or the beating of wings? Is it a violent fistfight or someone punching a watermelon? If sound effects are done skillfully, only the filmmakers will know for sure. Sound artists have countless ways to use sound to add drama, suspense, and humor to the movie experience. If movie sound effects are done well, the audience rarely notices distortions of reality.

Recalling Details

Details are facts or information about the main idea. The details will help you better understand a passage. Often these details will answer the questions Who? What? When? Why? and How?

Read the paragraph.

> Kanesha stopped and listened. People said the city was noisy, but the country had its own morning noises. Birds chirped in the trees. Grasshoppers hummed. In the distance, the whir of a tractor busily cutting grass to make hay gave a buzz of activity to the peaceful setting.

Fill in the chart with details from the paragraph.

Who	What
	Grasshoppers humming Birds chirping The whir of a tractor
When	**Where**

What's That Sound?

Many people say that a picture is worth a thousand words. That may be true, but in movies, that picture isn't complete without sound. A movie can have beautiful cinematography, skilled acting, and good writing, but without sound, a piece of the puzzle is missing. Think about it. It is one thing to see a herd of horses galloping across the screen, but it is the thundering of the hooves that helps you emotionally connect with the image.

Telling a Story Without Words

In movies, sound effects are sounds that are recorded to make a storytelling point without dialogue or music— the creaking of a door, the fluttering of wings, and the backfire of a car are all examples of sound effects. There are four kinds of sound effects: hard sound effects, background sound effects, Foley sound effects, and design sound effects.

Bird Chirping

Underline an example of a sound effect.

What sound effects would you hear in a kitchen scene?

One sound effect is _____.

Hard Sound and Background Sound Effects

Hard sound effects are sounds that commonly appear on screen, including cars driving by, doors slamming, or guns firing. The most realistic sounds are new recordings of the actual sound. However, such "big" sounds are not easy to record in the studio. If a sound effects editor needs to record an explosion, he or she may contact demolition companies to gain permission to attend the demolition and record the explosion.

Background sound effects are not as specific as hard sound effects. They are used in a more general way to suggest the setting to the audience. Audiences expect to hear the crashing of waves at the beach or the chirping of birds in an outdoor meadow. Effective background noises establish the ambience of the movie and set the emotional mood.

Crashing of Waves

Stadium Demolition

Circle the word that means "the character and atmosphere of a place."

What is a hard sound effect?

It is _____.

Foley and Design Sounds

Smaller sounds such as footsteps, the snipping of scissors, or a bird flapping its wings, require the work of a Foley artist. The term Foley artist is named after Jack Foley, one of the earliest Hollywood sound artists. The Foley artist listens to the soundtrack of the movie for everyday sounds. Then he or she enhances them with simple techniques, such as flapping a pair of gloves to recreate the sound of a bird's wings. These enhanced sounds are recorded. Then they are synchronized with onscreen action.

Design sound effects are sounds that do not occur in nature. Therefore, they must be interpreted and created by the sound artist. Design sound effects are common in science fiction movies with futuristic technology.

Foley artist at work

Common ways that sound effects are made	
Effect	**How It's Made**
Galloping horses	Banging empty coconut shells together
Kissing	Kissing back of hand
Punching someone	Thumping watermelons
High heels	Artist walks in high heels on a wooden platform
Bone-breaking blow	Breaking celery or bamboo or twisting a head of lettuce
Footsteps in snow	Squeezing a box of cornstarch
Bird flapping its wings	Flapping a pair of gloves
Grass or leaves crunching	Balling up audio tape

Transformers

Highlight the word that means "caused to occur at the same time or rate."

What is an example of a design sound effect in a movie?

An example is _____.

What Is Real?

Effective sound is about enhancing the moment, so sound designers must carefully balance realistic sounds with the need to make a point about the action. For example, a car's tires don't squeal every time someone is in a hurry to leave, but audiences have come to expect that sound with the scenario. Similarly, door creaks are rarely as loud or as long as they sound in horror movies, but exaggerating the sound gives the audience the sense that there is something to be afraid of on the other side. If sounds are done skillfully and the audience is engaged, people rarely notice these distortions of reality. However, these subtle sounds have an important emotional impact.

Creating sound effects truly is an art and a science, and the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences recognizes it as such. Each year, they give an Academy Award for Best Sound Editing. Over the years, the winners have given audiences moans, groans, creaks, and explosions that have held them on the edges of their seats. They've made movies a little more magical.

Underline the word that means "a sequence of events."

What are some sounds that might be enhanced in a movie?

One sound is _____.

Show What You Know

Details tell who, what, when, where, why, and how. Think about what you read about movies and their sound effects.

Complete the chart to tell more about movie sound effects.

What do movie sound effects do?	Who creates design sound effects?
How are they created?	**What types of sound effects are used?**

What Did You Learn?

Think about what you learned from the passage. Then circle the letter of the correct answer.

1. What are design sound effects?

    A loud sound effects

    B small sound effects

    C sound effects that occur in nature

    D sound effects that do not occur in nature

2. Which word in the passage means "the art or science of motion-picture photography?

    A image

    B dialogue

    C cinematography

    D technology

3. What is the last thing a Foley artist does?

    A listen to the soundtrack

    B synchronize the sound

    C recreate the sound

    D record the sound

4. What is the effect of exaggerating the sound of the turning of a door handle?

    A It makes the movie realistic.

    B It creates a sense of suspense.

    C It causes the sound to not match the action.

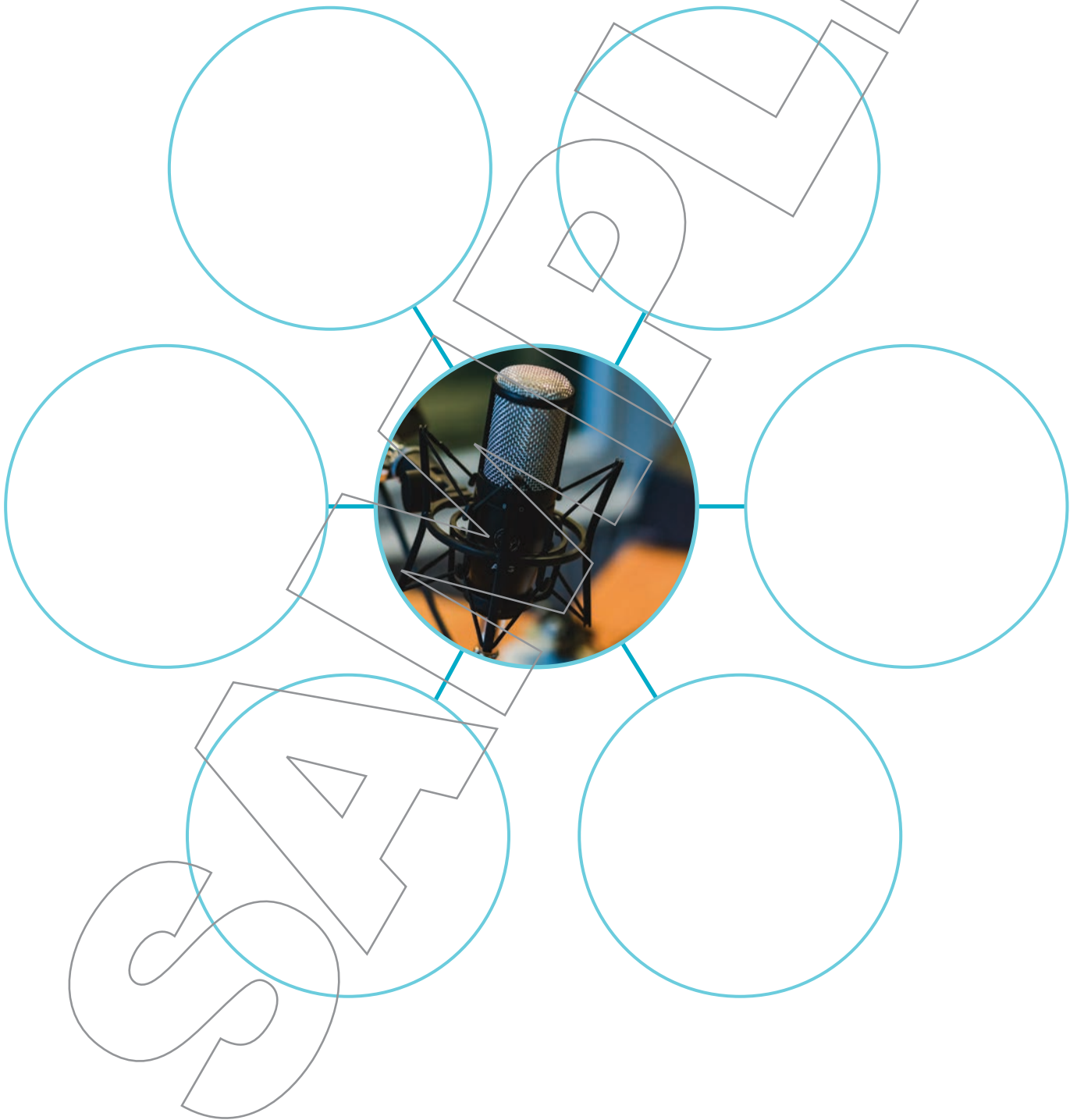   **D** It decreases the emotional impact of the movie.

Listen and Discuss

Listen to a passage about voice actors. While you listen the second time, take notes on the web below.
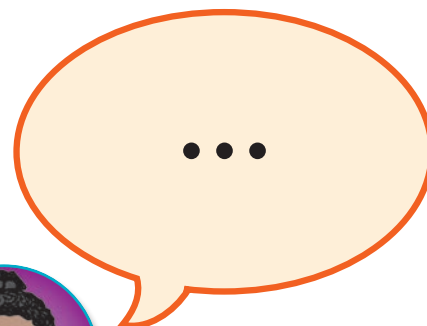
Listen and Discuss

What does a voice actor do?

Animated Characters

Voice Actor Ashley Eckstein

...

Learning About Language

Synonyms

Synonyms are words that have the same meaning, or almost the same meaning.

Practiced and *rehearsed* are synonyms.

Miguel *practiced* his lines with his costar.

Miguel *rehearsed* his lines with his costar.

A thesaurus is a good tool for finding synonyms. Look up the word for which you need a synonym and read the list of other words that mean the same thing or almost the same thing.

Read these sentences from the passage. Then write a word that means the same as the word shown. Use a thesaurus, if needed.

1. That may be true, but in _____, that picture isn't complete without sound.
   movies

2. The most _____ sounds are new recordings of the _____ sound.   realistic   actual

3. However, such "big" sounds are not easy to _____ in the studio.
   record

4. Design sound effects are sounds that do not _____ in nature.
   occur

5. Then he or she _____ them with simple techniques.
   enhances

6. Effective background noises establish the _____ of the movie and set the emotional mood.   ambience

Learning About Language

Draw a line from each word in the left column to its synonym in the right column.

1. created   illustrator

2. mood   shows

3. cartoonist   characters

4. programs   tone

5. roles   invented

Write a synonym for each of the words below. Then write a sentence using the new word.

1. beach   _____

   _____

2. curtail   _____

   _____

3. bogus   _____

   _____

4. assess   _____

   _____

5. equilibrium   _____

   _____

Write About It

A **summary** is a brief overview. It includes the main idea and the most important details. Summaries should be concise and coherent. Think about what you learned about enhanced sound effects, ambience, and a Foley artist at work.

Write a paragraph to briefly tell someone else about what you have learned about movie sound effects.

Plan My Writing

Fill in the chart to help you write your summary.

Introduction Movie sound effects add ambience to a movie.
Important Fact
Important Fact
Closing

Sound effects are an important part of movies because _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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_____

_____

_____

_____.

Most sound effects are enhanced. A Foley artist is _____

_____

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_____.