

The Art of Foley

Foley is the art of creating sound effects for radio, film, and television. The art of Foley began in the early days of radio programming and is still used in modern movies and shows. The creation of sound effects is named for Jack Donovan Foley.

Directions: Despite over 100 years of sound effects, many sounds of Foley have stayed the same. Can you guess which “instruments” make which sounds?

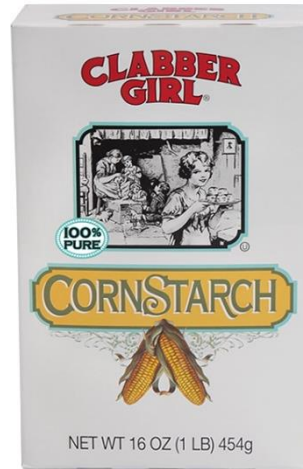
Fill in the blanks next to the name of each “instrument” with the sound effects in the word bank.



Celery



Coconut Halves



Box of Cornstarch



Cabbage



Cellophane

Celery _____

Coconut Halves _____

Box of Cornstarch _____

Cabbage _____

Cellophane _____

Word Bank

Stabbing

Bones Breaking

Fire

Horse Hooves

Walking Through Snow



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Answers and Additional Information

Foley is the art of creating sound effects for radio, film, and television. The art of Foley began in the early days of radio programming and is still used in modern movies and shows. The creation of sound effects is named for Jack Donovan Foley. He started as a sound effect artist for Universal Studios in 1914. Foley took inspiration from live theater and created realistic sounds using everyday items.

Creating realistic sound effects was important in radio as well as in movies and film. During filming, on set microphones focused only on picking up the dialogue of the actors. Foley and his team would record an audio track of the sound effects—like footsteps and doors opening and closing—after the film was shot. Jack Foley became the expert in sound effects and worked until his death in 1967.

Currently, some sounds—like computer noises or car engines—are created by a Sound FX Editor. Modern films and TV programs still rely heavily on Foley artists. Contemporary Foley artists create the sounds for three key areas: specific props, movement, and footsteps. Artists have studios with rooms of different props and equipment. One of these tools includes a surface called a Foley pit. Foley pits are areas with different flooring types used to make sure footsteps sound accurate. A Foley artist will walk in time with a character, in similar shoes, and across a similar floor type. Attention to detail is key when creating convincing sound effects.

Answer Key

Celery—Bones Breaking

Coconut Halves—Horse Hooves

Box of Cornstarch—Walking Through Snow

Cabbage—Stabbing

Cellophane—Fire