A movie soundtrack is put together in many interconnected stages by a number of different sound professionals. The first step in assembling the soundtrack is recording the dialogue, which includes not only conversations between two or more people, but also voiceovers and narration. Most of the dialogue is recorded during filming on the soundstage or on location by the production sound mixer and his or her crew. When the cameras are not running, the production sound crew records “wild tracks” or “wild sound” for post-production use by sound editors and mixers. These recordings can later be cut into the soundtrack if they are needed.

Not all film dialogue is recorded live. Automated Dialogue Replacement or ADR is used to record new dialogue if the live track is unusable or if the director wants to change some of the actors’ lines. During ADR, actors watch a scene many times and practice matching the words to the lip movements of the characters onscreen.

Narration and voiceovers and specific sound effects are also recorded in post-production. Voiceovers can clue us into a character’s private thoughts or provide voices for animated characters. The most common example of narration is found in documentary or educational films, when a voice on the soundtrack informs the audience about the happenings onscreen.

According to Oscar-winning film and sound editor Walter Murch, humans can focus on a maximum of two sounds at a time. In daily life, we tune out most of the background noise, focusing only on what is important to us.

**Activity 2**

Sit quietly at home, in a park, at the mall or in a place of your or your teacher’s choice. List all the different sounds you hear.

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________________________________________________________

Now describe the qualities of each sound. Is it high- or low-pitched? Is it fast or slow? Loud or soft? Rhythmic?

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Did you hear any unexpected sounds? What were they?

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________________________________________________________
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Was it ever completely silent?

________________________________________________________

How did it feel to listen carefully to sound? Do you agree with Walter Murch’s statement? Why or why not?

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