

# RESOURCES FOR TEACHING ABOUT THE CIRCUS

## WEB SITES

**[www.circusworldmuseum.com](http://www.circusworldmuseum.com)**

-This site has information and lesson plan ideas using a circus theme in history, science, music, social studies, math, language arts, technology, geography, and, if you can believe it, *more*.

**[www.ringling.com](http://www.ringling.com)**

-This is an excellent site with thoroughly developed lesson plans, projects, and background information, all about circus, in foreign language, math, science, PE and health, history and social studies, vocational and occupational topics, English/ language arts, and visual and performing arts. This site also gives you lessons and ideas at different education levels. (i.e. preschool, early elementary, middle, high school)

**[www.smirkus.org](http://www.smirkus.org)**

-This web site gives lots of information about Vermont's famous youth circus.

**[www.circusfans.org](http://www.circusfans.org)**

-Here is a site with tons of great stuff for teachers, kids, and fans of the circus.

**[www.bigapplecircus.org](http://www.bigapplecircus.org)**

-many great resources for teachers and kids

**[www.circusweb.com](http://www.circusweb.com)**

**[www.sfcircus.org](http://www.sfcircus.org)**

## BOOKS

Bolton, Reg. *Circus in a Suitcase*. New Plays Inc., 1982. How-to put on a home-spun, shoe-string circus.

Bridwell, Norman. *Clifford at the Circus*. Scholastic Book Services, 1977. Picturebook

Cockenpot, Marianne. *Eugenio*. Editions de Seuil, 1993. A beautiful picturebook about a circus folk tale.

Cone, Molly. *The Ringling Brothers*. Thomas Y. Cromwell Company, 1971. Easy-to-read depiction of how the Ringling brothers started their circus.

Conrad, Eleanor Bishop. *The Teddy Bear Circus*. T.S. Denison & Co., 1969. Easy-to-read story in rhyme.

Cross, Helen Reeder. *The Real Tom Thumb*. Four Winds Press, 1980. Intermediate. Biography of Charles Sherwood Stratton.

Culhane, John. *The American Circus: An Illustrated History*. Henry Holt, 1990. Circus history from A to Z focusing on the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

De Regniers, Beatrice S., and Al Giese. *Circus*. New York: Viking Press, 1966. (K-3)

Dreamer, Sue. *Circus ABC* and *Circus 1,2,3*. Little, Brown, and Co., 1985. Board books.

Eckley, Wilton. *The American Circus*. G.K. Hall and Co., 1984. Adult. An in-depth study of the history of the American circus.

Falconer, Ian. *OLIVIA Saves the Circus*. Atheneum Books, 2001. An instant classic about a precocious pig who embellishes her story of her trip to the circus.

Fenner, Mildred S. and Wolcott. *The Circus: Lure and Legend*. Prentice Hall, 1970. Complete circus and photographs along with interesting anecdotes about the circus from world-renowned personalities.

Fenton, D.X. *Behind the Circus Scene*. Crestwood House, 1980. Intermediate. Describes behind-the-scenes activities at the circus.

Fife, Bruce, et al. *Creative Clowning*. Java Publishing Company, 1988. Adult. A complete text on the clowning profession.

Fox, Charles and Parkenson, Tom. *The Circus in America*. Country Beautiful, 1969. History of circus acts and features full-color reproductions of circus posters dating from 1871.

Garbutt, Bernard. *Up Goes the Big Top*. Chicago: Children's Press, 1966. (grades 1-3)

Harmer, Mable. *The Circus*. Regensteiner Publishing Enterprises, 1981. Easy-to-read.

Harris, Stephen Michael. *This is My Trunk*. Atheneum, 1985. A friendly clown tells about traveling and performing with the circus.

Hoh, LaVahn and Rough, William. *Step Right Up: The Adventures of Circus in America*. Betterway Publications, Inc., 1990. Detailed chronology of the American Circus from mudshows to the big top and beyond.

Hopkins, Lee Bennett. *Circus! Circus!* Alfred P. Knopf., 1982. Eighteen short poems about the circus and its performers. Wonderfully illustrated.

Knight, Hillary. *The Circus is Coming*. New York: Western, 1978. (preschool-2)

Krementz, Jill. *A Very Young Circus Flyer*. Alfred P. Knopf Inc., 1979. Interesting, illustrated account of nine-year-old Tito Frafan's flying act and his backstage life. Photographs.

Laslo, Cybthia. *The Rosen Photo Guide to a Career in the Circus*. Rosen Publishing Group, 1988. Describes the many different jobs available in every aspect of the circus.

Lorant, Terry and Carroll, Jon. ***The Pickle Family Circus***. The Pickle Press, 1986. A beautiful memoirs of a small family circus.

MacDonald, Sharon. ***We Learn All About the Circus***. Fearon Teacher Aids, 1988. Reproducible worksheets, background info., flannel board patterns, creative movement ideas, circus masks, and more.

Mermin, Rob. ***Circus Smirkus: A True Story of High Adventure and Low Comedy***. Troll Press, 1997. Autobiography of Smirkus founder, Rob Mermin, and a fun historical account of the birth of Circus Smirkus. A *must read*.

McInnes, John. ***On With the Circus!*** Gerrard, 1973. Judy learns to be a clown.

Otis, James. ***Toby Tyler***. Harper & Row, 1880. A circus classic of a small boy's adventure.

Powledge, Fred. ***Born on the Circus***. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976. The Story of a young circus performer.

Prelutsky, Jack. ***Circus***. Aladdin Books, MacMillan Publishing Co., 1974. Delightful circus poetry to read out loud.

Priceman, Margorie. ***Emeline at the Circus***. Dragonfly Books, 1999. Picture book. Excellent story about an "educational" class trip to the circus.

Schenk de Regniers, Beatrice. ***Circus***. Viking Press, 1966. Picture book.

Seuss, Dr. ***If I Ran the Circus***. Random House, 1956. Circus Fantasy told in rhyme.

Speaight, George. ***A History of the Circus***. The Tantivy Press, 1980. Adult. A thorough history of the circus accompanied by full colorful photographs and illustrations.

Sutton, Felix. ***The Big Book of Clowns***. New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1966. ( grades K-3)

Thaler, Mike. ***The Clown's Smile***. Harper & Roe, 1986. Easy-to-Read. An elusive smile flies from a clown's face and lands on each of his fellow performers.

Wildsmith, Brian. ***The Circus***. Oxford University Press, 1970. Beautifully illustrated wordless picturebook.

Wiley, Jack. ***Basic Circus Skills***. Solipaz Publishing Co., 1984. Learn to form easy or complicated human pyramids, or simply juggle.

## VIDEOS

Videos marked with an asterisk (\*) are available to be borrowed by contacting **Robert Kitchen, 29 Damon St., Fall River, MA 02720-0388**. Others can possible be purchased or borrowed from Circus Smirkus (802) 533-7443.

\****Be A Clown-1***. (80 min)

\****Circus Nostalgia*** – 3 video set 1930's- present. (60 min. ea.)

\***All American Mud Shows**- 2 video set, 1950's-1980's. (2 hrs. ea.)

\***Circus Worlds.**

\***Circus and Man on a Flying Trapeze**- one tape (120 min.)

\***Modern Day Circuses**

\***Winterquarters**- off season at the circus.

\***Elephants and Cherry Pie**- award winning documentary.

\***Barnum's Big Top**- documentary

\***200 Years of Circus in America**-documentary (95 minutes)

\***Alphabet Factory at the Circus**- ages 2 and up

**Circus Smirkus**- performances as available

## **OTHER RESOURCES**

Clyde Beatty-Cole Bros. Circus

P.O. Box 127

DeLand, FL 32721-0127

Teaching Unit, Produced in 1990, available

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Circus of the Kids

926 Waverly Rd.

Tallahassee, FL 32312

Curriculum guide for circus theme units

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Circus Hall of Fame

P.O. Box 700

Peru, IN 46970

Many resources available

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Hertzberg Circus Collection and Museum

San Antonio Public Library

2109 W. Market St.

San Antonio, TX 78205

List of material available upon request

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Circus Education Specialists  
67 Lion Ln.  
Westbury, NY 11590

Everything you need and more. Charge for services.

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The National Circus Project  
67 Lion Ln.  
Westbury, NY 11590  
(516)334-2123

In-service for teachers, programs in schools

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Circus Minimus  
215 West 88<sup>th</sup> St. #12  
New York, NY  
(212)679-7575

circus across the curriculum, an integrated program available.

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Educational Book Distributers  
Box 551  
San Mateo, CA 94401

Three book set of K-3 circus books available.

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