

HISTORY OF THE CIRCUS

Words

Write the letter of each definition with the word it defines. If you don't know the definition, use the context of the reading passage to help you. Look for the words in bold as you read the passage.

PARAGRAPHS 1-2

Words	Definitions
1 entertainment	A n., a period of 100 years
2 century	B adj., very old; of the distant past
3 ancient	C n., place where an event is held
4 found	D n., a performance or show
5 venue	E v., to start or establish an institution
6 popular	F n., something shown to the public; a display
7 spectator	G n., a person who watches an event
8 exhibit	H n., repair or rebuilding
9 exotic	I adj., liked by many people
10 renovation	J adj., unusual; from a foreign place
11 massive	K adj., very big

PARAGRAPH 3

Words	Definitions
12 remnant	L v., to make something smaller
13 permanently	M n., a small group
14 reduce	N n., a small leftover piece
15 band	O n., a person who teaches skills to people or animals
16 trainer	P adv., for always
17 develop	Q v., to continue; stay alive
18 talent	R n., a special ability
19 survive	S v., to grow and change
20 grandeur	T n., greatness

Reading**History of the Circus**

- (1) The circus is one of the oldest forms of **entertainment** in history. Although the modern circus has been around for a few **centuries**, related forms of public entertainment have been in existence for millennia. The animal trainers, clowns, and other circus performers who are familiar to us today can trace their roots to the coliseums, stadiums, and racetracks of the **ancient** world.
- (2) The ancient Romans were the first to enjoy the circus. Around the sixth century B.C., the Circus Maximus was **founded** in Rome as a **venue** for public entertainment, mostly chariot races, which were a **popular spectator** sport. Other events held at the Circus Maximus included gladiator fights and **exhibits** of **exotic** animals such as elephants and tigers. These entertainments were less common than chariot races but still very popular. The original Circus Maximus venue was built entirely of wood. By the height of the Roman Empire, it had gone through several **renovations** and had become a **massive** marble stadium that could seat more than 200,000 spectators.
- (3) Chariot races continued to be held at the Circus Maximus for almost a century after the last **remnants** of the Roman Empire had vanished. Eventually, the site was **permanently** retired, and public entertainment was **reduced** to small **bands** of traveling¹ performers and animal **trainers**. It was during the Dark Ages that the circus began to **develop** into what we know today. The monarchs of Europe had court jesters, whose duty it was to provide amusement for the court. They combined the **talents** of jugglers, mimes, and clowns. The more common people enjoyed the performances of traveling entertainers, who went from village to village, putting on shows during festivals. These performers made up the medieval circus, which had little in common with the Circus Maximus other than adopting the word *circus* as its name. Leisure time was extremely rare during the Dark Ages, and people had few opportunities to enjoy circus performances. However, the circus **survived** to make a return to its former **grandeur** in the eighteenth century.
- (4) England was one of the first nations to embrace the modern circus. During the late 1700s, an Englishman named Philip Astley founded the first modern circus. He was a skilled rider who invented stunt riding on horseback. He performed his stunts in a circus ring, another of his ideas, within an indoor stadium. After his act became popular in London, he was asked by Louis XV to perform in France.

¹BrE: travelling

He later expanded his act to include clowns, acrobats, and parades of trained animals. The last addition to his act was slapstick humor. He had horseback riders pretend to fall off their horses and then go stumbling after them. Shortly after Astley's death, the circus spread to America.

(5) During the early 1800s, the United States took to the circus quickly after learning of its popularity in Europe. Joshua Brown, an American businessman, introduced the circus tent in 1825. The use of portable tents allowed him to take his act all over the country. His traveling circus was a massive success as a business enterprise and was loved by audiences everywhere. Most circuses today are variations of Brown's circus.

Answer the questions about History of the Circus.

Questions 1–4

Do the following describe the ancient circus, the modern circus, or both?

*Write the correct letter, **A**, **B**, or **C**.*

- A** Ancient circus
- B** Modern circus
- C** Both the ancient circus and the modern circus

- **1** had animal exhibits
- **2** entertained spectators with races
- **3** entertainments included falling off horses
- **4** took place in a massive venue

Questions 5–7

*Choose the correct letter, **A**, **B**, **C**, or **D**.*

5 The Circus Maximus

- A** was not a popular place to visit.
- B** developed during the Dark Ages.
- C** went through a number of renovations.
- D** took place in a portable tent.

6 The court jesters of the Dark Ages usually

A were skilled animal trainers.
 B had several different talents.
 C performed at village festivals.
 D entertained the common people.

7 In the eighteenth century, the modern circus was founded by

A a horse rider from England.
 B a Roman businessman.
 C some performers in France.
 D a band of American entertainers.

Word Families

A

Complete each sentence with the correct word from the word family chart. Make nouns plural where necessary. Use the correct form of verbs.

noun	noun	verb
development	developer	develop

1 The circus in new ways after it arrived in the United States.

2 Philip Astley is known as the of stunt riding.

3 Joshua Brown's introduction of the circus tent was an important contribution to the of the circus.

noun	noun	verb	adjective
entertainment	entertainer	entertain	entertaining

4 People often hire clowns to children at parties.

5 We spent a very afternoon at the circus.

6 The job of a circus looks like fun, but it is really very difficult.

7 The circus is still a favorite form of today.

noun	adjective	adverb
permanence	permanent	permanently

8 Unlike the traveling bands of performers, court jesters had jobs.

9 The of the circus as a form of entertainment shows how much people enjoy it.

10 Circuses don't stay in one place but travel around from city to city.

noun	verb	adjective	adverb
popularity	popularize	popular	popularly

11 The circus is in many parts of the world.

12 The modern circus is known as the Big Top.

13 Joshua Brown helped to the circus in America.

14 The circus still enjoys great

noun	noun	verb
survival	survivor	survive

15 The of the circus is due to its ability to change with the times.

16 The circus has in many forms throughout the centuries

17 The circus as a form of entertainment is a of the hard times of the Dark Ages.

noun	verb	adjective
trainer	train	trained

18 Many circuses use elephants in their shows.

19 Some animals are easier to than others.

20 A circus animal has to be able to work with exotic animals.

Word Families

B

Choose the correct word family member from the list below to complete each blank.

1 development	developer	developed
2 entertainment	entertainer	entertained
3 trainers	trains	trained
4 popularity	popularize	popular
5 survival	survivors	survived
6 permanence	permanent	permanently

The **1**..... of the modern circus began in England in the eighteenth century. A skilled horseback rider¹ **2**..... audiences with stunt riding. He later added other kinds of performances to the show, such as clowns and **3**..... animals. The show became very **4**....., and the idea spread to other countries. The circus has **5**..... the test of time and is still enjoyed by people today. It holds a **6**..... place in our hearts.

¹BrE: horse rider

Paraphrases

Read the sentence from the reading passage. Then, choose the sentence that has the same meaning.

- 1 *Around the sixth century B.C., the Circus Maximus was founded in Rome as a venue for public entertainment, mostly chariot races, which were a popular spectator sport.* (paragraph 2)
 - A The Circus Maximus was founded in Rome because that's where the best chariot races were held.
 - B Originally, the Circus Maximus was a place where people enjoyed watching chariot races.
 - C Many people raced their chariots at the original Circus Maximus.

- 2 *However, the circus survived to make a return to its former grandeur in the eighteenth century.* (paragraph 3)
 - A The circus stayed alive to become great again in the 1700s.
 - B People started returning to the circus in great numbers in the 1700s.
 - C In the 1700s, small circuses started becoming bigger.

Dictionary Skill

DIFFERENT MEANINGS

Many words have more than one meaning.

Read the definitions below. Then, read the sentences and write the letter of the correct definition for each sentence.

QUESTIONS 1–2

found [FOWND]

- A *verb.* to start or establish an institution
- B *verb.* past tense and past participle of the verb *find*

..... 1 After we *found* our seats, we sat down and enjoyed the circus performance.

..... 2 It takes a lot of money, effort, and daring to *found* an entertainment business.

QUESTIONS 3–4

band [BAND]

A noun. a small group
B noun. a strip of cloth

..... **3** A band of actors walked through the park entertaining visitors with short performances.

..... **4** The performers wore brightly colored bands around their waists.

Listening

Track
5

*Listen to the talk. Choose the correct answer, **A**, **B**, or **C**.*

1 When was the Springfield Circus founded?

A 25 years ago
B 75 years ago
C 100 years ago

2 What has not changed since the circus was founded?

A The venue
B The ticket price
C The number of performers

3 What kinds of animals begin the show?

A Exotic
B Trained
C Massive

4 What is the most popular part of the show?

A Animals
B Clowns
C Dancers

**Writing
(Task 2)**

In your opinion, why is the circus still a popular form of entertainment in the modern electronic age?

Support your opinion with reasons and examples from your own knowledge or experience.

Write at least 250 words.

Speaking

Talk about the following topics.

What forms of entertainment are popular in your city?

Do you prefer to watch TV and movies or to see live entertainment?

Are you talented in any performing arts? What talents do you have that you would like to develop more?

Unit 2