

The Circus



Have you ever wanted to run away and join the circus, to become a trapeze artist or walk the high wire? Generations of kids have felt the same way. You may not be able to join the circus just yet, but you can learn all about it! Read about some of the main circus arts. Then, try out the activity below.

Clowning is one of the best-known parts of the circus, but there's more to clowns than big shoes and white makeup. Though they're there to make you laugh, clowning is actually serious business! A clown is an actor, a comedian, a mime and an acrobat all rolled into one.

Acrobats perform all kinds of gymnastic feats, such as tumbling, tightrope walking, and even equestrian vaulting! An equestrian is a person who performs on horseback, and equestrian vaulting is like a combination of dance and gymnastics, all done while riding a horse. Acrobatics also includes aerials.

Aerials are acrobatic feats that are performed in midair. Trapeze falls into this category, but there are many other kinds of aerials, too. Silks are huge strips of fabric that hang from the ceiling. The acrobat climbs the strips, wraps him or herself up, and then spins all the way down to the floor!

There are many other kinds of circus acts as well. You may have seen contortionists, who can bend themselves into all kinds of shapes, or unicyclists, who ride on a kind of bike with one wheel, or jugglers, who juggle everything from hats, to fruits, to rubber chickens!

Learn to Juggle!

What You Need:

- Two balls of the same size and weight

What You Do:

Hold your hands out in front of you, palms up, with one ball in your right hand. Toss the ball up in an arc, about as high as the top of your head, and catch it in the palm of your left hand. Then throw it back. Practice this until you can catch the ball easily each time you toss it. Next, start with a ball in each palm. Toss the first ball up in an arc and, as soon as it starts to fall, toss the other. Once you've caught each ball, repeat. It takes practice, but once you get it, juggling can be a lot of fun!