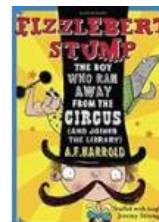




# Topic Knowledge Organiser

## Year: 3/4 Term: Autumn 2

### Topic: Circus Capers



#### Prior knowledge/key knowledge

**Prior knowledge** in this box.

Year 3/4

Children have an understanding of chronology from previous work on Prehistoric Britain. They also understand that we can learn about the past through famous people eg: Samuel Pepys.

**Origins of the circus**

What are the origins of the circus? Explore the Roman circus – where was Rome and how long ago was this? Put this in the context of prior knowledge about prehistoric Britain and today.

**Travelling entertainers**

Travelling troupes; court jesters and how the idea of mobile entertainment continued in the Middle Ages and beyond

**Philip Astley**

The establishment of what was to become the modern circus and what it involved

**Barnum and beyond**

The spread of the circus in the USA and across Europe

**The Big Top**

JP Brown and the introduction of the canvas Big Top – what effect did it have on the circus?

**Russia and the circus**

Training to be a circus act and the Moscow State Circus

**The circus today**

Cirque Soleil and beyond



#### Time Line

Over 2000 years ago	First circus established in Rome, the Circus Maximus
c.14 and c.15 centuries	Travelling entertainers wandered from town to town
1768	Philip Astley establishes his circus
1825	Joshua Purdey Brown uses a canvas tent Circuses were also popular in the United States by this time
1927	The State University of Circus and Variety Acts was established in Moscow
1950's	Moscow State Circus starts touring
1960's	Awareness of animal rights develops which has consequences for the circus
Present day	Circuses have moved away from animal performances

#### Key skills /investigative focus

Developing chronology	Creating time lines to show the history of the circus
Key figures from the past	Learning about Philip Astley; Barnum, JP Brown

#### Vocabulary

Circus	1.a travelling company of acrobats, clowns, and other entertainers which gives performances, typically in a large tent, in a series of different places. 2.(in ancient Rome) a rounded or oval arena lined with tiers of seats, used for equestrian and other sports and games eg: "the Circus Maximus"
Pull down	When the circus big top is taken down and packed away ready for the next place
Aerialist	Someone who performs above the ground using skills, attached to the ceiling of the Big Top
High wire	A tightly stretched wire above the floor which artists will walk across
Joey	A nickname for a clown after one of the most famous clowns, Joseph Grimaldi
Rola bola	A balancing act where a performer will stand on a cylinder
Trapeze	A swing attached to the ceiling which acrobats use to perform stunts

#### Big Questions/Challenging Perceptions

Should animals perform in a circus?

Discuss animal rights; write persuasive arguments

