



## Teacher Guide Circus Curriculum Connections

### VISUAL ART LESSON & PROJECT IDEAS

#### Grades K-2

Tie the music of the circus to clowns, and discuss the three types of clowns: White Face, Auguste, and Character. Have students design clown faces, and then create them! Masks, face paint, or colorful drawings make an excellent end product.

The Clown Museum:

<http://www.theclownmuseum.org/types.html>

#### Grades 3-5

Connect the music of the circus to the transportation they use, focusing on the vintage circus wagons on display in the Circus Museum. Discuss the importance of color, type, and design, and how that pertains to the function of the vehicle. Have students create their own designs for a part of the circus that interests them. You could create your own 3-D models of these wagons using simple materials (shoeboxes) or found objects including wood, cardboard, dowel rods, or tinker toy wheels.

The Great Circus Parade, Milwaukee, WI:

[http://www.doj.state.wi.us/kidspage/fun\\_facts/greatcircus.htm](http://www.doj.state.wi.us/kidspage/fun_facts/greatcircus.htm)

The Circus in America:

<http://www.circusinamerica.org/public/video>

#### Grades 6-8

Circus posters were essential for communicating the contents of the show to potential customers. Students could listen to circus music, sketch or take notes, and create an informational poster for the Circus Band, similar to that of the Windjammers. Use images and type to draw in visitors and communicate information. For schools with computer labs, create this poster using publishing software or paint programs – the type is much more readable that way!

Circus Posters at the Princeton Library:

[http://libweb5.princeton.edu/visual\\_materials/Circus/TC093.html](http://libweb5.princeton.edu/visual_materials/Circus/TC093.html)

Circus Posters from outside the US:

<http://www.theartofposter.com/CYRKGL.htm>

#### Grades 9-12

Using circus music as inspiration, look at fine artists who have used the circus as a theme in their work. Famous painters including Degas, Toulouse-Lautrec, and Picasso have explored the circus, clowns, and harlequins as symbols for their feelings. American artist Walt Kuhn has also created memorable fine art featuring the faces of circus performers. Create your own fine art, using materials that most effectively describe your feelings towards circus music, culture, and performance. Experiment with collage, painting, photography and assemblage to tell your story.

Walt Kuhn:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walt\\_Kuhn](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walt_Kuhn)

**VA.E.1.1.1** Understands that people create art for various reasons and that everyday objects are designed by artists

**VA.B.1.2.2** Understands what makes different art media, techniques, and processes effective or ineffective in communicating various ideas

**VA.B.1.3.2** Knows how the qualities and characteristic of art media, techniques, and processes can be used to enhance communication of experiences and ideas

**VA.E.1.4.2** Understands and identifies the skills that artists use in a various careers to promote creativity, fluency, flexibility, and elaboration within the arts and across life.



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### MUSIC LESSONS & PROJECT IDEAS

#### Grades K-2

To connect to the spirit of the circus parade, play music similar to that of our program, and then play *Carnival of the Animals* by Camille Saint-Saëns. Describe to the students how the parade would look, and show photographs of the animals that participate. Then, give the students an opportunity to be one of those animals in the parade, as they parade around the room!

Animal reference:

<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/coloring/circus.shtml>

Carnival of the Animals Reference:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Carnival\\_of\\_the\\_Animals](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Carnival_of_the_Animals)

#### Grades 3-5

Discuss circuses as moving cities, and their process of set-up and strike daily. Discuss how this affects the type of instruments the circus band could use & transport. With this as a basis, students can brainstorm in groups new instruments to add to the band, which are portable, and can be made from ordinary objects (i.e. Washboard, playing spoons – utilitarian objects used to make rhythms.) Possibly view performances like *Stomp* to get them inspired – using everyday tools like brooms and buckets can create great results! Students make/create these instruments and perform their own circus music.

Stomp Online:

<http://www.stomponline.com/>

A Short History of the Circus Band:

<http://www.sideshowworld.com/tgodcircusbands.html>

#### Grades 6-8

Compare and contrast the music of the Windjammers and the music of modern circuses like Cirque du Soleil. Create a timeline of musical styles that emerged between the two, and identify how these affected the modern circus. Display timelines with images and information in grand style!

Cirque du Soleil:

<http://www.cirquedusoleil.com/CirqueDuSoleil/en/default.htm>

#### Grades 9-12

Building upon the 6-8 lesson:

Inspired by Cirque du Soleil, using modern instruments and technology, create new variations on the themes and music you've investigated –use computers to generate sounds, and bring these two circus related pieces into the 21<sup>st</sup> century... and beyond.

**MU.C.1.1.3** Knows the general cultural and/ or historical settings of various types of music

**MU.C.1.2.3** Understands the roles that regions, events, and historical context have in generating various types of music

**MU.C.1.3.1** Knows the main characteristics of the music of various cultures, historical periods, genres, and composers

**MU.C.1.4.2** Understands the development of American Music