

## THE CIRCUS COMES TO TOWN

### Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Learn mapping skills by locating circus destinations
- Identify elements that make American cities unique
- Practice research and writing skills
- Develop creative arts skills

### Standards

**Language Arts:** Writing: Gathers and uses information for research purposes

**Geography:** Understands uses of maps; knows location of places and major cities in America

**Geography:** Knows how physical, human, social, cultural and economic processes shape the features of places

### Materials Needed

Handout: “Follow the Circus” map

Scarves or anything that can be used as blindfolds

### Teacher Notes

The *Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey*<sup>®</sup> Circus is coming to town—a great opportunity for students to enjoy all the action and excitement in the three rings. It’s also an opportunity for you to bring mapping skills to life by having students “visit” different cities where the circus will be playing on its tour.

In this lesson, students will learn about compass points, geography and what makes different cities special. The activities and extensions will also give students a chance to develop language arts skills and express themselves artistically.

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### Activity Directions

- 1) Have younger students locate different objects in the classroom using compass points. For example, with all students facing in the same direction, ask: What diamond-shaped object is on the wall in the northwest corner? How many squares can you find on the east wall?
- 2) Have older students work in pairs sitting on the floor facing each other. Have one partner wear a blindfold. The partner without the blindfold chooses a small object, tells his/her partner what it is, places it someplace between them, then helps the blindfolded partner locate the object by calling out directions. Terms like “near left/right,” “far left/right” and “middle” can be added if necessary. Goal: The blindfolded student tries to touch the object on the first try without feeling around for it. Reverse roles. Hint: Be certain directions are given from the blindfolded partner’s viewpoint.
- 3) Distribute the handout “Following the Circus.” Have students follow the directions to locate different cities on the circus tour.

ANSWERS: 1) Chicago, 2) Los Angeles, 3) Miami, 4) Phoenix, 5) Trenton

### Extensions

- 1) Ask students to pretend they are traveling with the circus and choose a city on the tour to research. Research should focus on what makes the city unique—e.g., its cultural attractions, products, prominent architecture, landmarks, weather, etc. Have students write postcards as if they were visiting that city, explaining why they “wish you were here.”
- 2) Have students draw actual postcards that promote cities on the tour.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

*The Greatest Show On Earth*® will visit almost 100 cities on its two-year tour.

**Use the clues to find out some of the exciting places the show will visit!**



## Follow the Circus

1. Start in Atlanta and follow the circus as we tour the United States. Use the grid and compass directions to find the cities we visit.

After Atlanta, the first city on the *Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey*® Circus tour is at the southern tip of Lake Michigan. It is known as the “Windy City.”

From Atlanta move three squares west. Then move four squares north followed by one square east.

2. The tour moves from here to the Pacific Coast and the sprawling “City of Angels” where the weather is sunny throughout most of the year.

From the last destination, move one square north, then move 12 squares west. Then move four squares south.

3. The next leg of the tour takes the circus to a city between the Everglades and the Atlantic Ocean.

From the last city move 16 squares east and then five squares south.

4. The fourth stop lies in the heart of a desert region called the Sonoran Desert. It is located in the center of the state in a place called the “Valley of the Sun.”

From the last city go eight spaces west and then four spaces north. Move a further five spaces west, and you’ve found the fourth city on the tour.

5. Our final destination is home to Princeton University, and it is known as the site where George Washington crossed the Delaware River.

From the last destination, move seven squares east and four squares north. Finally go a further seven squares east, and you’ve arrived at the final stop on our circus tour.