

# OVER THE TOP!

## WRITING ACTIVITY

### After the Circus: It's Your Turn Now!

#### Learning Objectives

Students will:

- ▶ Write formal letters
- ▶ Organize ideas and create a report on the experience of going to *Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey*®
- ▶ Review learning objectives from lessons in the *Ringling Bros.*® Educator Packet

#### Standards

**Writing Applications:** Write personal and formal letters, thank-you notes that show awareness of the knowledge and interests of the audience and establish a purpose and context; include the date, proper salutation, body, closing and signature.

#### Materials Needed

- ▶ Writing paper
- ▶ Pens or pencils
- ▶ Completed Packet Worksheets

#### Teacher Notes

What do students like to do after experiencing something wonderful and exciting? Talk about it! Recreate the experience with the written word. This review of an experience promotes committing new information to memory and helps your students develop a connection with each other through the bond of a common experience.

This "After the Circus" lesson provides your students with real-world, letter-writing practice, promotes reading comprehension and the retention of information learned throughout the lessons in the Educator Packet.

#### Activity Directions

The first school day after your trip to *Ringling Bros.*:

1) **Say to your students:**

What is the polite thing to do when you get a gift from someone or when you get a special treat from someone?

(Write back and say "Thank you!")

Today each of you will write a letter thanking the people at *Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey* and letting them know what you learned from the lessons they sent and your trip to *Ringling Bros.*!

- 2) Have your students divide into three groups, one for each lesson in the Educator Packet. In those groups, have students review the lesson, the handout(s) and brainstorm ideas on what to write. The following questions should be used to direct the content of the letters:
- 1) What did you learn from the lesson?
  - 2) Do you think a trip to *Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey*<sup>®</sup> is a good way to learn new things? Why or why not?
  - 3) For you, what was the best part of the *Ringling Bros.*<sup>®</sup> learning adventure?
- 3) Using their list of ideas, have each student write a letter to the cast and crew of *Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey*. Demonstrate the format for salutations, paragraph indentation and signature.
- 4) Send a sample of your student letters via e-mail to [education@feldinc.com](mailto:education@feldinc.com)

Please include "Student Letter to *Ringling Bros.*" in the subject line of the e-mail.

(Note: Be sure to remind students that it is not customary to receive a response to a thank you letter.)

## Extensions

- 1) Interview your parents/guardians/grandparents/neighbors about experiences they may have had going to the circus. What do they remember? With the class, brainstorm questions you might ask to gather information. Give an oral presentation.

## Standard

**Language Arts:** Listening and Speaking: Ask questions that seek information; Select a focus, organizational structure and point of view for an oral presentation; Engage the audience with appropriate verbal cues, facial expressions and gestures.

- 2) Research various aspects of *Ringling Bros.*, its history and its stars by using the Internet. See suggested topics in bold below. What kinds of information are available?
- Use a browser to find and research information on a "famous circus clown."
  - Search the Internet to find the history of the **Ringling Brothers, P. T. Barnum, James A. Bailey, or Jumbo the elephant.**
  - Follow the growth of our ever-expanding elephant herd by logging on to [www.elephantcenter.com](http://www.elephantcenter.com). Which elephant calf is your favorite?

## Standard

**Research and Technology:** Use features of electronic text to locate information.

- 3) Create an act of your own! Now imagine you are a newspaper reporter. Write an essay describing an exciting and new act for *Ringling Bros.* Are animals involved or performers or both? What roles do they play? How would you make the act exciting and entertaining for the audience? How would you dress the performers? Design a poster or brochure describing your new act. Give your new act a title, and write what the Ringmaster should say to introduce the act to the audience. Start with: Ladies and Gentlemen, Children Of All Ages...

## Standard

**Writing Applications:** Write descriptions that use details to present and support unified impressions of experiences.

