



IS FOR AWESOME

A SHOW FOR ALL AGES

Death-defying acts

AND STRANGE BEASTS IN CAGES.



In the early 1900s, in a time before big budget movies, video games and television, circus day was the most anticipated event in towns across America. Even during the depression, crowds lined up to see snake charmers, strongmen and acrobats. And no other form of advertisement was as effective as the circus poster in promoting this event. *Who put the B in the Ballyhoo?* (Houghton Mifflin 2007) illustrates the alphabet through colorful posters and the stars that brought the circus to life. See the grace of the bareback rider, the daring of the acrobat, the strangeness of the snake charmer, and the delight of the dancing pigs.

Learn new adjectives like “Kooky”, “Jumbo” and “Enchanting.”

What was it like when the circus came to town? This book gives you a ringside seat.



AUTHOR PRESENTATION

(appropriate for ages 8 and up)

Imagine being born, raised and working your whole life in one place. You never travel farther than the nearest town and you see mostly the same faces every day. You have no TV, computer or ipod. Then, one day, you see the brightly colored posters littering the streets and splashing color on every barn and small business—the circus is coming to town! Banks and local businesses close, farmers leave their fields, and schools even cancel classes.

Discussion topic:

Discuss the circus as a form of entertainment in the late 1800's to the 1930s. What was Circus Day like during the depression and how did it impact families? What were other forms of entertainment that changed the culture of America? How were circus stars viewed by the American public? Author gives short presentation on the history of the circus using examples of circus stars from the book.

Topics include:

- How the Dime Museum was the first form of today's museums
- How Barnum tricked audiences with his Fiji Mermaid, Wild Men of Borneo, Mummies and several other hoaxes
- A true tale of the tattooed prince
- Twins that spent their life stuck together!
- Why Annie Oakley almost shot the Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany
- How did Houdini always escape?
- The real Jumbo elephant and how his fame lives on today
- Did the last living unicorn tour with the circus?

A SUCCESSFUL AUTHOR VISIT

To have a successful author's visit, discuss the goals of the visit with the author. Become familiar with an author's book and in turn explain your curriculum and how the book can fit into the your learning objectives. Discuss the age range, number and personality of your classroom. This brochure outlines suggestions for tying the book into your program. Have another topic not listed here? Contact Carlyn Beccia at: info@CarlynBeccia.com.

For more information about the book, visit: www.WhoBallyhoo.com



Flea circuses were popular in London in the 1830s. Live fleas were trained to walk tightropes, perform trapeze acts, pull chariots and even jump out of cannons. A flea can jump over 150,000 times higher than its own height and can pull 160,000 times its own weight.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Carlyn Beccia has been painting and performing various acts of circus baboonery since she was a wee young girl. She first tested her own creativity in the human cannonball act by projecting her sister across the room. Her sister had to have stitches, but Carlyn knew she was destined for circus stardom. Carlyn attended the University of Massachusetts on a 4-year art scholarship and graduated in 1995. In 2005, Carlyn was the Grand Prize Portfolio Winner in the Society of Children's Writers & Illustrators

(SCBWI) art exhibition. In 2006, she was awarded a certificate of merit in The Society of Illustrators of Los Angeles, Illustration West 44 Annual and she was also the Grand Prize Portfolio Winner in the New England, Society of Children's Writers & Illustrators (NEW ENGLAND SCBWI) art exhibition. Carlyn paints with "digital oil brushes" to create a unique and deeply textured art. She enjoys giving live demonstrations of how art is created on the computer and encourages kids to experiment with the digital medium.

BE A SENSE-SATIONAL CIRCUS STAR

Overview: *Be a Sense-Sational Circus Star* encourages students to recognize that everyone has a special talent that makes them a star and encourages students to use their five senses to write, illustrate or describe that talent. Students will create a circus poster that highlights their unique circus act.

Learning Objectives:

- Students will use new adjectives that play off the five senses of touch, taste, smell, sight, and sound.
- Students will gain a deeper understanding of how everyone's talents differ.
- Students will learn a brief history of the circus and how America viewed circus stars.

(20 minutes) Presenter displays illustrations of circus stars from varied ethnic backgrounds and talks about their performances and why they were a star. What made them special? Why did people come and see them? How did they develop their talent?

(30 minutes) Students are encouraged to list their favorite activity that will become their "circus act". It can be something obvious like dancing, running, painting or even something less active like reading, helping others, or sharing. It can be something purely from their imagination that they would like to do someday. Once they have chosen a circus act students are asked to:

1. List action verbs for their circus act (it can be more than one)
2. Presenter lists the five senses and has a short discussion on adjectives in writing. Using these senses students are asked to list adjectives that describe their circus act.
3. For older students (list adverbs that describe their main actions)
4. Presenter gives short demonstration on how you might draw your circus poster using the five senses.

CRAFT IDEAS

(appropriate for ages 4-7)

Make a Group Circus Poster

In the late 1800s, circus posters were called "bills." The art for a circus bill was often created in an assembly line by several artists. For example, one artist would paint tigers, one would paint elephants, and one would work on the type. Because each bill was a team effort, they were never signed by the artists.

Creating art as a team is not easy! Each artist must combine their skill with the skill of their neighbor. In groups of 4-6, make a circus poster together and assign a circus star to be drawn by each child.

Individual Circus Posters

Have students bring in a picture of themselves and incorporate it into their own circus posters. Each student can pick a favorite circus star and use crayons, markers, cut letters and other scrap book elements to make their poster. Author gives a quick drawing demonstration and talks about the process of lithography in the circus poster.

WORD LIST

Who put the B in the Ballyhoo? can help children who are just learning to read and also those who are expanding their vocabulary. The book introduces several colorful adjectives associated with each letter of the alphabet. The wacky and energetic pictures will help kids to remember any new words along with giving them a glimpse into what life was like in the golden age of the circus.

A short list of adjectives students may not be familiar with:

Boastful
Enchanting
Imaginary
Dazzling
Fearless
Kooky
Jittery
Mysterious
Marvelous
Nimble
Funky
Zippy
Jumbo

A short list of circus characters and sayings illustrated in the book:

Menagerie
Bill
Hold your Horses!
Ballyhoo
Equestrian
Snake Charmer
Sharpshooter
Contortionist
The Fiji Mermaid
Wild Men of Borneo
The Flying Wallendas
Flea Circus
Houdini

STEP RIGHT UP!

IF YOU HAVE THE DIME THEN WE HAVE THE SHOW

Creative Exercises

1. Describe or write about a day at the circus using some of the newly learned words from the book.
2. Invent your own circus star. What does that circus star look like? What is their special talent?
3. With help from the author, draw your own circus star and practice hand-drawing letters.
4. Using pictures from the book, see how many creative adjectives you can use to describe the action in each scene.
5. Carlyn Beccia works entirely on the computer to create her art using a pressure sensitive tablet. Author gives a demonstration of how digital art is created
6. Circus Poetry. Poetry can be easy and fun when you use the metaphors of the circus. Using her dance background Carlyn discusses rhythm and meter in poetry.

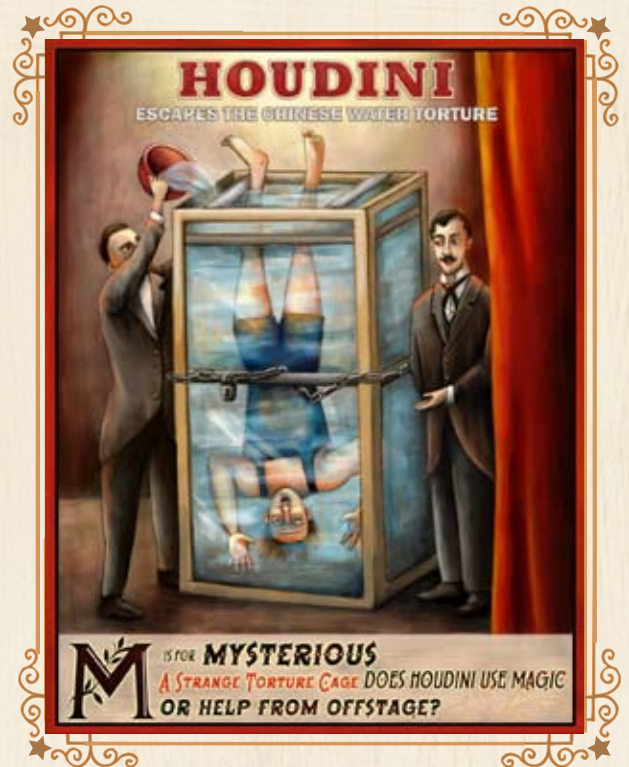


The ballyhoo" was a free show given outside a circus to entice customers into buying tickets. Today, the word ballyhoo means noisy advertising. The job of the "talker" (shown here) was to shout out the circus acts. The talker's job was so important that he was often the highest paid circus employee.

AUTHOR VISIT CHECKLIST

- Contact author at info@CarlynBeccia.com
- A Confirmation Agreement will be mailed. Sign and return. Keep a copy for your records.
- Contact bookseller, or if needed, order books.
- Notify author of arrangements: directions, hotel, etc.
- Prepare book order form (sample will be provided by author).
- Arrange for payment on the day of the visit. If an invoice or paperwork is needed, please contact author in advance so check can be prepared.
- Share the author's books with children and teachers. Knowing the book before the visit will get kids more excited about the visit. Visit the site www.WhoBallyhoo.com to learn more
- Send home order form with date due back.
- Contact your local newspaper about the visit. Place a blurb in the school newsletter publicizing the event.
- Make reminder announcement to return order forms.
- Have electrical outlets, projector and a place to project images prepared for author visit

For more information or to book an author visit, contact Carlyn Beccia at 781-334-4408 or Info@CarlynBeccia.com



Harry Houdini was famous for his escape acts and would free himself from handcuffs, chains, ropes and straightjackets. He even made a full grown elephant disappear during a performance in London's hippodrome.