Circus S’Cool

Learning objectives
- Tell a story or recount an experience in an organized manner, using descriptive detail.
- Formulate and answer questions to demonstrate full understanding of a given text.
- Construct correct verb tense when writing and speaking.
- Describe how a person's point of view can influence reactions, events, comprehension, and narrative.
- Create dialogue around experiences, events, and the characters' responses to given situations.
- Choose words, phrases, dialects, and punctuation that add expression and effect.

Setting the scene
The children are bored with computer games. It’s been raining outside for days, and they need some action. Mom and Dad have long since promised to take the whole family to the traveling circus the next time it comes to town. The circus is in town today, so the family set off for a grand day out!

Back home, they talk about the circus acts they have seen. “Let’s make our own circus act!” they shout excitedly. “We can use stuff from around the house for props! We can practice the tricks first and then put on a show for our family and friends!”

What cool circus tricks are they going to perform?

Building the story
Ask the students to build their own very special Mini Circus Tricks show.

- How will the circus acts be introduced?
- Should there be a ringmaster?
- What can be said to build up the excitement?
- Where should the audience be seated for optimal viewing?

Reflecting
Have the students reflect and talk about each of their characters as they build.

- What are they doing? What are they saying?
- What constitutes a fun act, and what doesn’t?
- How does a ringmaster build up tension and excitement among the audience?
- What about music, drums, and sound effects?

Ask the students to demonstrate how their scene structures help them to express their ideas.
Sharing and documenting

Ask the students to use the StoryVisualizer software to create their stories and focus on the various participants’ points of view. Have them tell their stories to an audience.

Suggestions for scripts:

Ringmaster: “Roll up! Roll up! See the amazing levitating lady ‘Balancing Betty’ walk the plank. Will she fall? Not today . . . experience her amazing talent!”

Mickey Muscles: “If you all eat your spinach, you too will be able to lift 100 tires without getting tired!”

Audience: “I wonder how difficult that is. I’m going to try that cool trick when I get home.”

Clown: “Now, who’d like to be my victim, oops, I mean . . . volunteer? Who’d like to catch a flying egg on their head, oops, I mean . . . in a box?”

Sample solution

Learn how to create dramatic photographic effects in the “Hints for photographers” section of Tips & Tricks on page 32.

Extending

• Make a commercial or a comic to publicize your circus and to attract larger audiences.

• To increase dramatic effect, darken the room when performing your circus show. Use a flashlight as a spotlight.