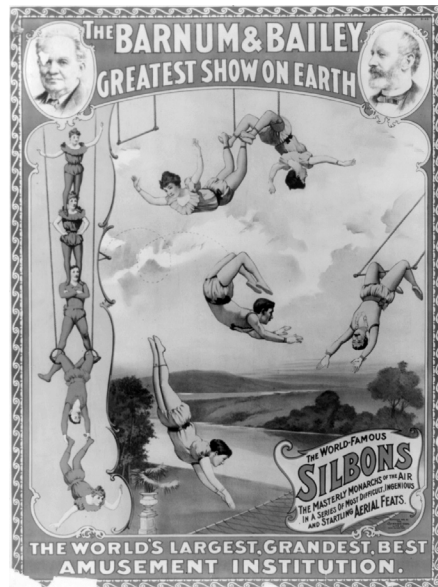


Practice with Hints

Use the Notes column to take notes and use SALSA™ strategies. There are a few hints to get you started.

Circus Fun



Circus poster from 1896 Library of Congress

Skim What can you learn from the poster and its caption?

Have you ever been to a circus? What is your favorite act? Maybe you like the high-wire performers or the lion tamer the best. Perhaps you like the elephants. Everyone loves the clowns, of course. They give a circus its character.

The Greatest Show on Earth

Circuses have been around for many years. Perhaps the best-known circus in this country today is the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey circus. It is the oldest circus in the United States. It is often called “The Greatest Show on Earth.”

Actually, this circus is a combination of two circuses. One was started by the Ringling brothers. The other was owned by P.T. Barnum and James Bailey. These are names every circus lover should know.

Notes

Look This section will contain details about the two circuses before they combined.

Circus History

Originally, there were five Ringling brothers who had a small circus that toured the Midwest and the Northeast. In those days, the circus went from town to town in small animal-drawn wagons. After their circus became successful, it grew a lot bigger. Then the circus traveled by train.

The Barnum & Bailey Circus was another large circus. It became well-known because of an elephant named Jumbo. Everyone wanted to see Jumbo. He was so famous that he traveled in a private railroad car which Barnum called “Jumbo’s palace car.” It was a red and gold car with double doors in the middle so Jumbo could get out easily. In 1883, Jumbo became even more famous when Barnum decided to walk Jumbo across the newly built Brooklyn Bridge to test its strength. Of course, Jumbo crossed safely, but the event made big news.

After the deaths of both Barnum and Bailey, the Ringling brothers bought their circus. At that time both circuses were huge and doing very well. The Ringling Brothers Circus had more than 1,000 people working for them, 335 horses, 26 elephants, and 16 camels.

Solve What do you think this section will be about?

New Circus

The Barnum & Bailey Circus was about the same size. But it was too hard to run both of the circuses separately. Charles and John Ringling, the only Ringling brothers still alive, decided to combine the two large circuses into one giant one.

The first appearance that the new circus made was at Madison Square Garden in New York City. That was on March 29, 1919. It was a huge success. Everyone came to see the famous acts.

Assemble Summarize the passage to yourself in two to three sentences to check your understanding.

In those days, there weren’t many other things to do for fun. There were no movies. There was no television. No one had a computer or played computer games, either. So the circus was very popular. People were awed by the trapeze performers. They cheered the jugglers. They screamed as the Human Bullet was blown out of a cannon. The circus was really the “Greatest Show on Earth.”

- 1** Why did Jumbo have double doors on his special train car?
- (A) There were double doors on all the cars.
 - (B) He could only walk sideways.
 - (C) He was too big for a single door.
 - (D) People could look at him more easily.



Hint—Inferences need evidence. Which answer choice is supported by story details?

- 2** Which is an example of cause and effect?
- (A) appearing in Madison Square Garden after the circuses were combined
 - (B) traveling by train instead of wagons
 - (C) calling the new circus “The Greatest Show on Earth”
 - (D) Jumbo becoming even more famous because he crossed the Brooklyn Bridge



Hint—Which event was caused by another event? Look for keywords to help you.

- 3** Why was there no television in 1919?
- (A) No one wanted to watch television.
 - (B) Televisions were very expensive.
 - (C) There was a law against television.
 - (D) Television had not been invented yet.




Hint—Use your own knowledge to figure out the answer to this question.

- 4** How is the section called “Circus History” organized?
- (A) It has no organization at all.
 - (B) It has a question and answer organization.
 - (C) Events are organized in the order they happened.
 - (D) The organization is based on cause and effect.




Hint—How are histories usually organized?

- 5** Which is an example of the author’s bias toward circuses?
- (A) saying that everyone loves the clowns
 - (B) telling when the new circus opened
 - (C) explaining how the new circus was formed
 - (D) saying there were no movies long ago

 *Hint*—Which choice shows you how the author feels about circuses?

- 6** Which statement from the article is an opinion?
- (A) People were awed by the trapeze performers.
 - (B) Actually, this circus is a combination of two circuses.
 - (C) After the deaths of both Barnum and Bailey, the Ringling brothers bought their circus.
 - (D) Originally, there were five Ringling brothers who had a small circus that toured the Midwest and the Northeast.

 *Hint*—Which statement is not a fact that can be checked?

7 Explain how the author uses compare-and-contrast organization in the passage when he talks about the Barnum & Bailey and the Ringling Brothers’ circuses. Use two details from the passage to support your answer.
