



THE CIRCUS

Constance the Giantess lived in a circus before Mr. Nebbercracker found her. In the past, circuses often had shows with people like Constance. These shows were very cruel and they stopped a long time ago.

When was the first circus?

The first circus was the Circus Maximus in Rome around 2,000 years ago. People went there to watch horse races. They also saw unusual animals, acrobats and special performers.

How did circuses change?

☛ For a long time after the Romans there were no large circuses. But performers went

to different towns and gave small shows.

☛ In 1768 Philip Astley opened one of the first circuses in London. Most of his shows were with horses. For many he is the 'father' of today's circus.

☛ In the 1800s circuses started in the USA. In 1835 P. T. Barnum started to use shows with unusual people.

☛ In 1927 the Moscow Circus School

**What do you think about circuses?
Do you want to be a circus performer?**

started. In the 1950s Russian circuses went to other countries. The acrobats were fantastic!

☛ In the 1960s and 1970s there weren't so many circuses. People weren't happy about animals in shows because it was cruel.

What is the circus like today?

The circus today is different from in the past. Some circuses still have animals (usually just horses), but most circuses just have people in their shows. These people can do fantastic and unusual things. The Cirque du Soleil is a very famous circus like this.

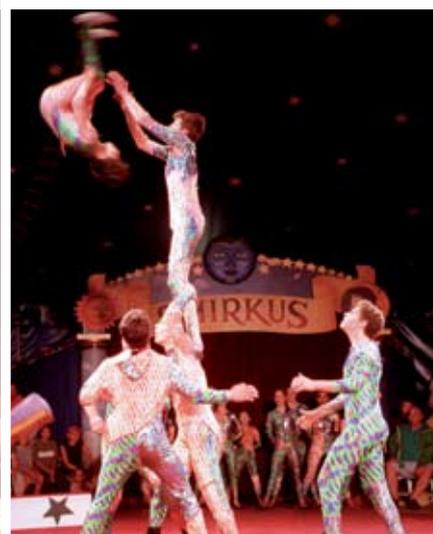
The Cirque du Soleil

The Cirque du Soleil ('Circus of the Sun') started in Canada in 1984. It is famous and very special because each show tells a story. It uses music, special lights and fantastic performers.

At first it moved round the world. Now some shows go to different countries, but the Cirque du Soleil's main home is in Las Vegas.



Acrobats in the Cirque du Soleil



Do you want to be in the circus?

CIRCUS SMIRKUS is a very special circus school. It started in 1987 in Vermont, USA. Young people go to Circus Smirkus in their school holidays and learn to be circus performers. Every summer Circus Smirkus has a show with the best performers from the school. They perform in more than 70 shows in 14 towns in 7 weeks!

**What do these words mean?
You can use a dictionary.**

**show cruel horse race unusual
animal acrobat perform/performer**