

Acrobats

By ReadWorks



Lions, tigers, bears, oh my! All these ferocious animals usually steal the spotlight at circuses. Circuses can be a lot of fun. Usually, there are popcorn, lion tamers, clowns, beautiful acrobats, and more. Even elephants walk across the stage with performers on their backs. But even with all the animals, one of the most exciting parts of the circus is the acrobats.

Dressed in colorful costumes, these amazing performers fly over the stage on trapezes. Acrobats have to train for many years to do all of these dangerous stunts. It requires a lot of practice. The trapeze is one of the oldest circus acts around. When acrobats first begin to train, they typically start on the trapeze. Then, they can develop new skills. There are many different types of stunts that professional acrobats can do.

Sometimes, performers use big pieces of silk that hang from the ceiling to the floor. They use their leg and arm strength to climb the silks. Then they spin, flip, and twirl with the fabric. They have to wrap the silks around their feet or wrists so that they can support their body. It is a big feat!

Acrobats also perform on the lyra, or aerial hoop. A rope hangs a big hoop, like a hula hoop, from the ceiling. Acrobats hang off the hoop to do different tricks. They can flip around the hoop, or climb around it using only their legs or arms. This stunt also requires a lot of body strength. Sometimes, two acrobats use just one hoop at the same time to perform. This is a very hard trick!

Some circuses only have acrobats. In New York City, there is one group called Lady Circus. These women are professional acrobats and have been training for years. They put on shows every month that always have a big audience. The acrobats wear very colorful costumes they make themselves. People love their performances! Since Lady Circus is loved so much, the acrobats often perform at other events around the city. But whenever they do perform, they always need high ceilings. They have to hang up their silks and hoops.

Even though it is a lot of work, the members of Lady Circus love what they do. Not many other people can say that they fly over a stage on a regular basis!

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. According to the passage, what is one of the most exciting parts of the circus?

- A the animals
- B the acrobats
- C the clowns

2. The author gives a list of what in the passage?

- A different kinds of tricks acrobats do
- B different kinds of tricks clowns do
- C different circuses with acrobats

3. Becoming an acrobat takes a lot of practice. What evidence from the passage best supports this conclusion?

- A "There are many different types of stunts that professional acrobats can do."
- B "Even though it is a lot of work, the members of Lady Circus love what they do."
- C "Acrobats have to train for many years to do all of these dangerous stunts."

4. "When acrobats first begin to train, they typically start on the trapeze. Then, they can develop new skills." Based on this information, what conclusion can you make about the trapeze?

- A The trapeze is the easiest trick to learn.
- B The trapeze is the hardest trick to learn.
- C The trapeze is as hard to learn as climbing the silks.

5. What is this passage mostly about?

- A how acrobats train and practice new tricks
- B a group of acrobats in New York called Lady Circus
- C acrobats and the tricks they do in the circus

6. Read the following sentences: "They use their leg and arm strength to climb the silks. Then they spin, flip, and twirl with the fabric. They have to wrap the silks around their feet or wrists so that they can support their body. It is a big **feat**!"

As used in this sentence, what does the word "**feat**" most nearly mean?

- A an easy thing to do
- B a difficult thing to do
- C a boring thing to do

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

There are many tricks an acrobat can do, _____ performing on the trapeze or on a hoop.

- A like
- B so
- C but

8. What do acrobats need a lot of to perform on the hoop?

9. Why do acrobats need to be strong to perform on the silks?

10. Acrobats are both talented performers and athletes. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Explain why. Support your answer using information from the passage.

Teacher Guide & Answers

Passage Reading Level: Lexile 770

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8. What do acrobats need a lot of to perform on the hoop?

Suggested answer: To perform on the hoop, acrobats need a lot of *body strength*.

9. Why do acrobats need to be strong to perform on the silks?

Suggested answer: Acrobats need to be strong to perform on the silks because they need leg and arm strength to climb the silks.

10. Acrobats are both talented performers and athletes. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Explain why. Support your answer using information from the passage.

Suggested answer: Answers may vary and should be supported by the passage. Examples:

- I agree with the statement. Acrobats are talented performers, because they perform on a stage in front of an audience. Acrobats are also athletes, because they need to be strong and athletic to climb silks and perform tricks on a hoop that is hanging in midair.
- I disagree with the statement. Yes, acrobats are talented performers, because they perform on a stage in front of an audience. But acrobats are not athletes. They may be strong, but the circus is not a sport, so they cannot be called athletes.