

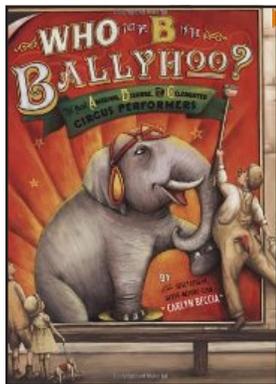


CRUCHLEY'S COLLECTION

Diana Cruchley is an award-winning educator and author, who has taught at elementary and secondary levels. Her workshops are practical, include detailed handouts, and are always enthusiastically received.

H. Diana Cruchley©2016, dianacruchley.com

WHO PUT THE B IN THE BALLYHOO?



Carlyn Beccia, Houghton Mifflin, ©2007, 978-0-618-71718-7

A delightful ABC book of circus anecdotes principally focussing on the most famous acts of Barnum and Bailey. It is all done in the style of the big circus posters of the 30's advertising the next circus to come to town. Visually gorgeous.

EXTREME WRITING

A springboard from a picture book to personal writing should provide at least three topics if possible. Here are some ideas:

1. Stories of going to any tent show - a circus, *Bard on the Beach*, *Children's Festival*, *Cirque du Soleil*, *Cavalria*, etc.
2. Stories of being fooled by something or someone: a magic show, an optical illusion, a friend.
3. The ABC's of school words, with an explanation for each. *A* is for alphabet. *B* is for brush. *C* is for classroom, and so on.

ART

Students could use the "vintage circus advertising images" they can find on the internet. Google: "Vintage Circus Poster Background" (images). They could then adapt the motifs to create posters for an up-coming school event using circus language.

CIRCUS LANGUAGE

Certain words and phrases are typical of the language used to advertise circus acts. A lot of them are used in the book itself: *weird, fascinating, truths, daring, strange, spectacular, never-before-seen, shocking, amaze, delight, enchant, dazzle*, and so on. This over-the-top language could be fun to use in a poster project to advertise a school event in "mock" circus style, or in creating a mock advertisement for their own piece of writing.

CIRCUS WORDS

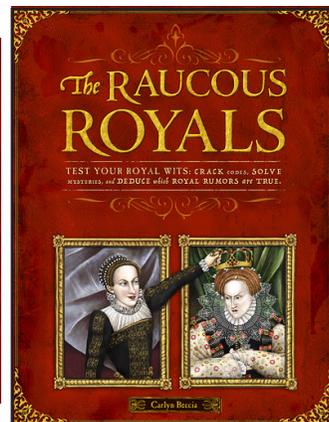
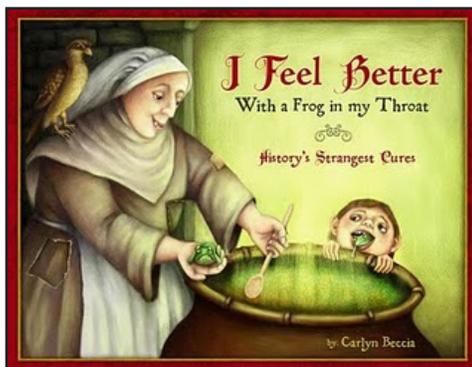
There are many common words and expressions that come from the circus world. Here are a few to explore with your students. They have been taken from the circus and theatre episode of *America's Secret Slang*, a worthwhile TV series:

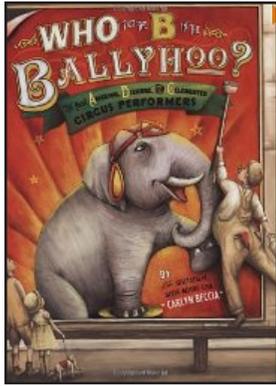
1. Circus - from the Circus Maximus in Rome (*circo*=circle, *maximus* = biggest).
2. Float - because they started out as decorated floating barges.
3. Carnival - from *carne* = meat, and *val* = removal. A celebration to eat all the food before the month of Lent in the Catholic faith.
4. Mardi Gras - *mardi*= Tuesday, *gras*= fat. Fat Tuesday. Again, the day to eat all the meat before Lent when meat may not be eaten.
5. Dog and Pony Show - from a cheap circus that only had a trained dog and a pony. Now used to mean any pair of speakers - like politicians - with a simple "act."
6. Jumping through hoops - from tricks done by trained dogs, to mean anyone who will do anything to get the deal.
7. Jumbo - from Jumbo the elephant, but now meaning large, as in jumbo popcorn.
8. Gimmick - a trick used by a carnie to cheat suckers at a carnival skill game.
9. Close but no cigar - a prize at a carnival skill game was often a cigar.

THE AUTHOR CARLYN BECCIA

Carlyn has two books which look like they might be terrific for classroom use:

1. *I Feel Better with a Frog in My Throat* - about history's strangest cures.
2. *The Raucous Royals* about which royal rumours are true, or not true. *Did Ann Boleyn have 6 fingers? Did George III really talk to trees?*





WHO PUT THE B IN BALLYHOO?, CONT.

FAMOUS CIRCUS ACTS

Here is a list of 30 famous circus acts or Wild West Show acts which students could quickly research and then report on to each other. They could produce a terrific picture book of their own, of famous circus acts.

1. Middlebush Giant (8 feet tall, 620 pounds)
2. Mabel Stark (1920's famous tiger trainer)
3. Gargantua the Great (1939, gorilla)
4. Mario Zacchini (shot out of a cannon)
5. Zip the Pinhead
6. General Tom Thumb (a midget)
7. Sarah Biffin (no arms, legs didn't work, could draw and sew)
8. Stephan Bibrowski (Lionel the lion-faced man, hypertrichosis)
9. William Hutchings (boy lightning calculator)
10. Wild Bill Hickok (Wild West Show)
11. Buffalo Bill Cody (Wild West Show)
12. Annie Oakley (Wild West Show)
13. Sitting Bull (Wild West Show)
14. Uno the Snake Charmer (1894)
15. May Wirth (equestrian, 1900's)
16. Flea Circus
17. Annie Jones (bearded lady)
18. Lancelot the Unicorn
19. Dan Rice (clown)
20. Skippy the Kangaroo
21. Flying Wallendas (trapeze artists)
22. Houdini (magician)
23. J.H. Walter (contortionist)
24. The Hilton Sisters (siamese twins)
25. Jumbo the Elephant
26. Wamo and Plutano (wild men of Borneo)
27. Babe Ruth (baseball hero)
28. Captain Costentenus (tattoos)
29. Ruth Pontico (fat lady)
30. Louis Cyr (strongest man in the world)

IT'S A HOAX

In *Who Put the B in Ballyhoo?*, the Fiji Mermaid is mentioned as one of the hoaxes of the circus. There are many strange hoaxes in history that students might enjoy researching as part of an Inquiry project. They would begin with some questions they design for themselves: *What is a hoax? How is it different from a trick, or a lie, or fraud? Why do people commit hoaxes? How are hoaxes discovered? Should people who commit hoaxes be jailed? Are certain kinds of hoaxes more common in certain time periods?* etc. At Diana Cruchley Pinterest there are 32 hoaxes ready to be used by you in an Inquiry unit with your students. <https://www.pinterest.com/diana32/hoaxes-inquiry/>

Here is a list of 30 to start with:

1. The Cottingley Fairies (1917)
2. The Alien Autopsy, 1995
3. The Piltdown Man, 1912
4. The Fiji Mermaid, 1842
5. The Turk, 1717
6. The Loch Ness Monster, 1934
7. The Cardiff Giant, 1869
8. The Gold Accumulator, 1897
9. Redheffer's Perpetual Motion Machine, 1812
10. The Great Balloon Hoax, 1844, Edgar Allan Poe
11. Crop Circles
12. The Hitler Diaries, 1986
13. The Pacific North West Tree Octopus, 1998
14. Paul is Dead, 1969
15. The Spaghetti Tree Harvest, 1957
16. *Naked Came the Stranger*, 1969, hoax book
17. Clever Hans, 1907
18. The Abyssinian Dreadnaught Hoax, 1969
19. The Archeorapter, 1999
20. The Sokal Hoax, 1986
21. The Nacirema, 1956
22. The Tasaday Tribe, 1971
23. The War of the Worlds, 1938
24. The Shark Attacking the Helicopter photo, 2001
25. Han van Meegeren, 1947
26. Michelangelo's Cupid, 1495
27. Wolfgang Beltracchi, 2007
28. Eric Hebborn, 1995
29. Nat Tate, 2011
30. The MMR Vaccine Causes Autism Hoax, 1998