

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Common and Proper Nouns

## At the Circus

### Reading Level 3

#### Part One - Common Nouns

**Directions:** Read each of the following sentences. Choose the **common noun** from the options below. Circle your choice.



1. My cousin and I saw the posters on the bulletin board at the grocery store announcing the arrival of the circus in our town.
  - a) saw
  - b) cousin
  - c) and
  - d) announcing
2. Englishman John Bill Ricketts put on the first complete circus performance in the United States on April 3rd, 1793 in Philadelphia.
  - a) performance
  - b) complete
  - c) Philadelphia
  - d) Ricketts
3. America's first wild animal trainer, Isaac Van Amburgh, generated controversy as far back as 1830 due to his cruel treatment of animals.
  - a) generated
  - b) Amburgh
  - c) controversy
  - d) far
4. The animal rights group PETA believes that abuse has always been the primary method for training circus animals.
  - a) method
  - b) always
  - c) PETA
  - d) been
5. Static trapeze, also known as fixed trapeze, is a type of circus art performed on the trapeze bars but, in contrast to other forms of trapeze, the bars and ropes mainly stay in place.
  - a) performed
  - b) and
  - c) mainly
  - d) art
6. Albert Petrovski set the world record for ring juggling in 1963 by juggling eleven rings simultaneously.
  - a) Albert
  - b) set
  - c) record
  - d) simultaneously

7. Willie Hunt was a tightrope walker better known as *The Great Farini* who crossed the Niagara Falls many times.
- a) Farini
  - b) Niagara
  - c) known
  - d) walker
8. Forte the Ringmaster stepped into the center of the circus tent and exclaimed, "Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, children of all ages..."
- a) Forte
  - b) Ladies
  - c) exclaimed
  - d) of
9. Contemporary circuses tell a story or convey a theme with traditional circus skills.
- a) theme
  - b) convey
  - c) traditional
  - d) with
10. Even though Chumbo was the biggest clown in the circus, he rode the tiniest unicycle.
- a) Chumbo
  - b) biggest
  - c) unicycle
  - d) rode
11. In the days before lighting, it was the ringmaster's job to "direct" the attention of the audience to the appropriate performance area.
- a) appropriate
  - b) lighting
  - c) before
  - d) was
12. The seats at the Barnes Brother's Circus were so tightly packed that my family and I felt like we were climbing into a clown car when we filed into our row.
- a) tightly
  - b) Barnes Brother's Circus
  - c) climbing
  - d) seats
13. The English word *circus* was first used in the 14th century and derives from the Greek word *kirkos*, which means *circle* or *ring*.
- a) word
  - b) Greek
  - c) English
  - d) derives
14. The seven Ringling brothers transformed their small company into one of America's largest circuses in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.
- a) Ringling
  - b) small
  - c) centuries
  - d) America's

15. Gargantua was a famous gorilla who saved the Ringling Brothers' circus from bankruptcy.
- a) famous
  - b) Gargantua
  - c) gorilla
  - d) saved
16. The popularity of circuses dwindled after World War II, perhaps due to the spread of television.
- a) television
  - b) World War II
  - c) dwindled
  - d) perhaps
17. Circus activities take place within a ring and large circuses may have multiple rings, like the six-ringed Moscow State Circus.
- a) Moscow
  - b) multiple
  - c) like
  - d) ring
18. A character clown plays roles such as butcher, baker, or policeman.
- a) such
  - b) butcher
  - c) or
  - d) plays
19. The whiteface clown holds the highest status in the clown hierarchy and is the oldest of the clown archetypes.
- a) holds
  - b) hierarchy
  - c) highest
  - d) oldest
20. The augustes or red clowns are a misfortunate bunch and usually get the pies in the face, accidentally sit in wet paint, or have their pants ripped off.
- a) misfortunate
  - b) accidentally
  - c) wet
  - d) paint

## Part Two - Proper Nouns

**Directions:** Read each sentence. Choose the **proper noun** and circle your choice.

21. Charlie Chaplin fits the definition of a character clown.
- a) Charlie
  - b) fits
  - c) character
  - d) clown
22. Americans call a clown's act a *gag* while Europeans usually refer to it as an *entree*.
- a) clown's
  - b) gag
  - c) Americans
  - d) *entree*

23. Many acrobatics troupes from China feature performers who spin multiple plates on sticks.
- a) multiple
  - b) Many
  - c) China
  - d) plates
24. Hoppy the Clown exaggerated how difficult it was to ride his unicycle to create a comedic effect.
- a) Hoppy
  - b) difficult
  - c) exaggerated
  - d) unicycle
25. Emmett Leo Kelly created the memorable clown figure "Weary Willie" based on the hobos of the Great Depression.
- a) figure
  - b) hobos
  - c) based
  - d) Weary Willie
26. When Irvin Feld noticed that there were only 14 clowns remaining in the circus, and that many of them were in their 50s, he started a clown college.
- a) When
  - b) Irvin
  - c) professional
  - d) circus
27. Animal trainer, Gunther Gebel-Williams, appeared on several TV shows with his tigers.
- a) Animal
  - b) tigers
  - c) several
  - d) Gunther
28. We asked the vendor selling Coca-Cola how much they cost and his response almost made me do acrobatics
- a) Coca-Cola
  - b) We
  - c) asked
  - d) acrobatics
29. The Ringling Bros. began retiring their elephants in 2015 in a move that pleased animal rights activists but upset some circus fans.
- a) fans
  - b) Ringling Bros.
  - c) retiring
  - d) activists
30. Students did not have to pay any tuition to attend the Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Clown College.
- a) Students
  - b) attend
  - c) Clown College
  - d) tuition