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

   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