

# The History of Circuses

11 A circus is a travelling group of people who put on  
20 shows. They often perform in large tents and travel  
29 from place to place with their show. Philip Astley  
39 created a circus in 1768. At the circus, there was  
46 horse riding, clowns, rope dancers and jugglers.  
54 When the circus became more popular, they often  
62 took place in buildings which were made from  
70 wood. The first travelling circuses did not become  
78 popular until the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Circus groups  
88 began to use large canvas tents known as 'big tops'.  
96 They soon became popular in many places around  
107 the world. Lots of people still go to the circus to  
109 this day.



## Quick Questions



1. Who created the first circus?

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2. What does the word 'popular' mean?

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\_\_\_\_\_



3. Why do you think circuses started to travel from place to place?

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4. Number these facts from 1 to 3 to show the order that they appear in the text.

- Circus groups started to use large tents.
- The first circus showed horse riding.
- Circuses took place in wooden buildings.

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# Answers



1. Who created the first circus?

**Philip Astley created the first circus.**



2. What does the word 'popular' mean?

**The word 'popular' means something that is well liked by a lot of people.**



3. Why do you think circuses started to travel from place to place?

**Accept any sensible answer linked to the text, such as: I think that circuses started to travel so more people could see the show.**



4. Number these facts from 1 to 3 to show the order that they appear in the text.

**3** Circus groups started to use large tents.

**1** The first circus showed horse riding.

**2** Circuses took place in wooden buildings.