

# A day at the Circus

Level: 2º E.S.O.

Grammar: *Present Continuous / Contrast with the Present Simple / Ordinal Numbers.*

Functions: *Talking about activities taking place at the moment / Dates.*

Phonetics: *Pronunciation of -ing endings.*

This unit is based on a series of fictional characters who work in a circus, joined by a central character, Rick Evans, who is looking for his cousin Maxwell, the clown. Throughout his search, Rick meets different performers and they talk about their jobs, abilities, and the things they are doing at the moment, thus introducing the main grammar and function contents of the unit.

We can also revise here functions such as meeting people.

We have not put special emphasis on the grammar points, but attempted a ludic approach with plenty of pictures and effects, in order to get the attention of very young students.

The exercises are connected through the characters and related to each other, so this unit is meant to be used in a linear way. However, some of the exercises might be used separately.

This unit is divided into five parts plus an introduction which aims at making the students familiar with some basic vocabulary and the characters who are to appear in the course of the story. The first four parts are introduced by a short dialogue whereas the last one starts with a listening exercise: "The show".

You can move into any part of the unit easily by using the menu, which is accessible from any activity.

Please remind your students always to read the task button before they start any exercises and the section "Icons", where the use of all the buttons in the unit is explained. It is important that you do this, taking into account that they tend not to read the instructions before approaching the exercises.

This is the structure of the unit:

## INTRODUCTORY SCREEN

From this screen you can access the menu, the credits screen, this document and the explanation of the use of the icons (don't forget to have a look at this before you start the unit).

## INTRODUCTION - WARMING UP

**1. Vocabulary:** This exercise introduces some basic vocabulary related to the world of circus. Students must drag the words from the centre of the screen into the squares in the pictures. As most of the vocabulary is new they can repeat the exercise as many times as necessary until they get all the correct answers.

**2. Who is who:** In this screen the main characters who will appear in the unit are introduced. If they click on the faces the people will give some information about themselves.

**3. Jobs:** This is a comprehension exercise in which they must match the pictures of the characters with the names of their jobs. Students must click on the people first and drag the cursor onto the job labels.

## PART I

**1. Dialogue 1:** In the first dialogue Rick, who is looking for his cousin Maxwell, the clown, meets the Great Subinovsky, lion tamer. Subinovsky sends Rick to look for his cousin at the lion's place. The aim of this exercise is that of any dialogue, to listen to the words and have a first contact with present continuous structures.

As in the rest of the dialogues of the unit, students should click on the sound button to listen to the words in that particular page, or they may click on the "Run all dialogue" button to listen to the whole conversation.

**2. Identify the Present Continuous:** Here students have the script of the previous dialogue. Some of the sentences are outlined by a square. They must click only on the squares containing a present continuous sentence. The square will then turn blue. If they click on a wrong square, it will turn red. There are two counters for right and wrong answers at the bottom of the page.

**Grammar help:** Present Continuous sentences; positive and negative statements and questions.

**3. Spelling of the -ing form:** In this exercise students will first revise the spelling rules for the gerund on a first screen. Then they have to remember these rules and write the gerund form of four groups of verbs. When they click the "Check" answer, they will see the correct answers and a square with the corresponding rule will appear as feedback.

**Grammar help:** Spelling rules for the -ing form.

**4. Affirmative sentences:** This is a writing exercise. Students have to describe a circus scene by writing short sentences in the squares numbered one to five. If they place the mouse on the stars beside the numbers, the subject and verb of each sentence will appear. When they finish they must compare their sentences with the correct ones which will be shown when they click the "Check" button.

**5. Negative sentences:** In this exercise the students are given four sentences and they have to make them negative, and then check them.

**6. Questions:** Here, students must turn affirmative sentences into questions. There are five sentences in five different pages which are indicated by the balls a seal is balancing on her nose.

## PART II

**1. Dialogue 2:** Rick Evans meets Henry Hopper at the lion's place. Maxwell is not there. Hopper tells Rick that Maxwell is at the fortune teller's caravan.

**2. Present Continuous and Present Simple:** This is a gap filling exercise. There are several sentences both in the Present Simple and the Present Continuous with some gaps which must be filled in with a correct verb form or an expression of time.

**Grammar help:** Differences in the use of the Present Simple and the Present Continuous.

**3. Role play:** In this exercise the students must play the part of Rick and ask three questions. They can click on the words to listen to the original voices, and then record the questions. They can hear

their recording with the "Play" button. When they have recorded all three questions, they can listen to the whole dialogue ("Run all dialogue" button).

Before doing this exercise it is convenient to try the record button first: the recording starts when you click the button and it will go on until you click it again; the words "start" and "stop" appear beside the button to help you; even if you go on to the next page, the recording will not stop if you have not clicked the button for a second time.

## PART III

**1. Dialogue 3:** Rick meets Madame Le Noir, the fortune teller. She guesses everything Rick wants to know, even before he asks, and tells him where Maxwell is.

**2. Writing - sentence linkers:** Here, we can see Madame Le Noir's guesses in her crystal ball. Students have to rewrite these sentences using linkers and correcting those which are not true. To move from one guess onto the following, they must click on the fortune teller's right eye, and the left eye shows them the previous guess.

**Grammar help:** Basic sentence linking: "and" and "but".

**3. Phonetics:** This exercise is made up of two different parts. In the first part, students can listen to some minimal pairs to distinguish the sounds of <n> and <ng>. The second part is a test: they must click on the hooters to listen to a word, and then click on the word they have just heard.

## PART IV

**1. Dialogue 4:** Rick finally finds his cousin in his caravan. He is preparing for the show and absent-mindedly putting ice-cream on his face, instead of make up.

**2. Comprehension:** This is a simple True/False exercise designed to check the comprehension of the previous dialogue. When students click an answer, a happy or sad clown and a feedback sentence will appear.

**3. Ordinal numbers - dates:** In this exercise there is a calendar hanging on the wall of a caravan. On it some dates are marked and the name of a town written on it (places and dates where the circus is performing). The students have to complete the sentences with the dates shown on the calendar. They must write the dates in words, numbers are not accepted.

**Grammar help:** Ordinal numbers and dates.

## PART V

**1. Listening: The Show:** The show has begun, and the ringmaster is describing the performances which are taking place. Students must fill in the gaps with the words they hear from the ringmaster. In order to listen to him, they must click the audio button.

**2. Final test:** This test is a multiple choice exercise with 15 questions about vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, the story of the unit, etc. They must help Maxwell, the clown, to prepare for the show. When they click a right answer, some make-up or clothing will be added. They must give ten correct answers to pass the test.

## ENDING - Farewell

## A day at the Circus - Answer key

### INTRODUCTION - WARMING UP

**1. Vocabulary:** (From left to right, from top to bottom)

clown	stalls	fortune teller	whip
flea			midget
make-up	lion tamer	wig	seal

**3. Jobs:** (From left to right)

electrician / lion tamer / circus performer / clown / fortune teller

### PART I

**2. Identify the Present Continuous:**

1. I'm looking for Maxwell Evans, the clown.
2. Max is feeding the lions.
3. What are you doing?
4. I'm looking for Betsy.
5. I think she's hiding in the sofa.
6. Now I'm taming fleas.

**3. Spelling of the -ing form:**

1. eating / studying / working / doing
2. smoking / hating / living / closing
3. swimming / stopping / sitting / beginning
4. dying / lying

**4. Affirmative sentences:**

1. Madame Le Noir is levitating.
2. The trapeze artist is jumping into the air.
3. The seals are juggling.
4. The clown is riding a monocycle.
5. The audience are clapping.

**5. Negative sentences:**

1. The clown isn't eating a hamburger.
2. The seals aren't dancing.
3. Madame Le Noir isn't sitting on a chair
4. The audience aren't leaving the circus.

**6. Questions:**

1. Is Madame le Noir levitating?
2. Is the trapeze artist jumping into the air?
3. Are the seals juggling?
4. Is the clown riding a monocycle?
5. Are the audience clapping?

### PART II

**2. Present Continuous and Present Simple:**

1. is feeding
2. on Mondays and Thursdays
3. is having
4. normally / on Thursdays
5. is looking
6. is taming / today
7. tames

### PART III

**3. Phonetics:** run / sing / ban / wrong

## **PART IV**

**2. Comprehension:** 1. False 2. True 3. True 4. False 5. True 6. False

**3. Ordinal numbers - dates:**

1. the tenth of January (January, the tenth)
2. the twenty-ninth of March (March, the twenty-ninth)
3. the twenty-fifth of August (August, the twenty-fifth)
4. the twenty-first of September (September, the twenty-first)
5. the third of November (November, the third)

## **PART V**

**1. Listening: The Show:** circus / ring / midget / bananas / Great / lion / head / hungry

**2. Final test:** 1 b 2 c 3 a 4 c 5 b 6 a 7 a 8 c 9 b 10 b 11 c 12 a 13 c 14 b 15 a

## A day at the Circus – Audio scripts

### INTRODUCTION - WARMING UP

#### 2. Who is who:

**Rick:** Oh!, hello, I'm Rick Evans. I am an electrician. I am here at the Great Tortellini Brothers Circus. I am looking for my cousin Maxwell.

**Subinovsky:** Hi!, I'm the Great Subinovsky, lion tamer. Now I am doing a very interesting experiment.

**Hopper:** Hello!, I am Henry Hopper, circus performer. Pleased to meet you.

**Madame Le Noir:** I am Madame Le Noir, the fortune teller. I am seeing you in my crystal ball. You are learning English on the computer....Good luck!

**Maxwell Evans:** Hi there!, I am Maxwell, the clown. I am Rick's cousin. I am preparing for the show.

### PART I

#### 1. Dialogue 1:

**Rick:** Er.... good evening!

**Mr. Subinovsky:** Good evening. Can I help you?

**Rick:** Yes, I am looking for Maxwell Evans, the clown. I am his cousin, Rick.

**Mr. Subinovsky:** Oh!, pleased to meet you. Max is feeding the lions, over there.

**Rick:** Thanks. Er... excuse me, what are you doing?

**Mr. Subinovsky:** I'm looking for Betsy. I need her for this act.

**Rick:** Who is Betsy?. Perhaps I can help you.

**Mr. Subinovsky:** Betsy is a tame flea. She's the star. I think she is hiding in the sofa.

**Rick:** Are you a flea tamer?

**Mr. Subinovsky:** Yes, I am. I normally tame lions, but now I am taming fleas. It is more original.

**Rick:** Ouch!

**Mr. Subinovsky:** What's the matter?

**Rick:** I think I know where Betsy is. She is in my shirt.

### PART II

#### 1. Dialogue 2:

**Hopper:** Hello, are you looking for someone?

**Rick:** Yes, I am looking for my cousin, Maxwell. Is he feeding the lions?

**Hopper:** No, he is not. I am feeding them today. I always feed the lions on Mondays and Thursdays. Today is Thursday.

**Rick:** Where is Max, then?

**Hopper:** He is probably having tea at the fortune teller's caravan. He usually has tea with Ms Le Noir on Thursdays.

**Rick:** Thank you.... excuse me, what is your job at the circus, apart from feeding the lions on Mondays and Thursdays?

**Hopper:** Don't you know me? I'm the famous Henry Hopper, the tallest midget in the world!

**Rick:** Midget? You are not a midget!, you are very tall !

**Hopper:** I know. That is why I am famous.

**Rick:** I see.

## PART III

### 1. Dialogue 3: Rick

**Ms. Le Noir:** Good evening. Come in Mr. Evans.

**Rick:** Oh! you know my name !

**Ms. Le Noir:** So ... you are looking for Maxwell.

**Rick:** Yes, I am

**Ms. Le Noir:** And you think he is having tea with me.

**Rick:** Yes, I do.

**Ms. Le Noir:** Well, he is not having tea with me today. He is very busy. Everybody is doing a lot of things, we are preparing for the new show. Maxwell is in his caravan. He is making up for the show. He isn't having tea, he is having an ice-cream. Vanilla.

**Rick:** Er.. thank you. How do you know all these things?

**Ms. Le Noir:** I am a fortune teller. I know everything.

**Rick:** I see. Thanks again

## PART IV

### 1. Dialogue 4: Rick

**Rick:** Max!

**Maxwell:** Rick!, What a fantastic surprise! What are you doing here?

**Rick:** I am working at the town. I live here. Now that the circus is here, I wanted to see you.

**Maxwell:** Please, sit down. I'm having an ice-cream. Do you want one?

**Rick:** No, thank you. I see that you are preparing for the show.

**Maxwell:** Yes, and it is a long, boring thing. First, I put on this white make up, second I draw two big circles around my eyes...

**Rick:** Er... Max..

**Maxwell:** Third, I put on the red nose. Fourth, I put on that wig...

**Rick:** Er... Max.

**Maxwell:** Fifth, I put on those baggy trousers and the enormous shoes, sixth....

**Rick:** Er... Max.. I'm sorry to interrupt you, but you are making a mistake. You are not putting make up on your face. You are putting vanilla ice cream on it....

**Maxwell:** Well.... thank you for telling me, Rick.

## **PART V**

### **1. Listening: The Show:**

Ladies and gentlemen. the Great Tortellini Brothers Circus is proud to introduce our performers. In the middle of the ring, the famous Henry Hopper, the tallest midget in the world, is eating five bananas at the same time. Next to him, in the cage, the great Subinovsky, lion and flea tamer, is putting his head inside a lion's mouth. Oops! the lion was hungry.