



## Born Free – Wild animals in the circus

### About Born Free

Born Free’s mission is to ensure that all wild animals, whether living in captivity or in the wild, are treated with compassion and respect and are able to live their lives according to their needs. Born Free opposes the exploitation of wild animals in captivity and campaigns to Keep Wildlife in the Wild.

Born Free promotes Compassionate Conservation to enhance the survival of threatened species in the wild and protect natural habitats while respecting the needs of and safeguarding the welfare of individual animals. Born Free seeks to have a positive impact on animals in the wild and protect their ecosystems in perpetuity, for their own intrinsic value and for the critical roles they play within the natural world. For more information about Born Free please visit: [www.bornfree.org.uk](http://www.bornfree.org.uk).

### Background Information

Globally, thousands of wild animals are used in circuses and forced to perform demeaning and unnatural tricks to entertain the public. The welfare of both domesticated and wild animals are often severely compromised in a circus environment.

Born Free is wholly opposed to the use of wild animals in circuses and considers the practice to be unethical. There is overwhelming evidence of compromised animal welfare in the circus environment. Our position is consistent with the increasing number of local and national jurisdictions that have banned the use of wild animals as a result of these concerns.

Born Free works across the UK and Europe to bring an end to the use of wild animals in circuses and supports international campaign partners in their efforts. Where possible, Born Free rescues animals from appalling conditions in circuses. Over the years we have rescued and rehomed several big cats from circuses in France, Bulgaria, Italy and Germany. We provide them with high standard lifetime care in sanctuaries. However, these are the lucky ones.

### About these resources

These resources are designed for **Key Stage 3** but they can easily be adapted for all Key Stages. All lessons are planned to take an hour, although there is plenty of opportunity to shorten or lengthen activities. This topic has many cross-curricular links that are highlighted below, with strong links to the Science, English, Geography, SMSC and Citizenship curriculums.

### KS3 Curriculum Links:

<a href="#">Geography</a>	
Locational knowledge (Africa)	Extend their locational knowledge and deepen their spatial awareness of the world’s countries using maps of the world to focus on Africa, Russia, Asia (including China and India), and the Middle East, focusing on their environmental regions, including polar and hot deserts, key physical and human characteristics, countries and major cities.
Place knowledge	Understand geographical similarities, differences and links between places through the study of human and physical geography of a region within Africa, and of a region within Asia.
Human and physical	Understand how human and physical processes interact to influence, and

geography	change landscapes, environments and the climate; and how human activity relies on effective functioning of natural systems.
Ecosystems*	Study how food chains and food webs work in different environments. Understand how animals have unique adaptations and characteristics developed to survive in particular environments. Understand how human actions are destroying and altering ecosystems.
<u>Science</u>	
Experimental skills and investigations	Ask questions and develop a line of enquiry based on observations of the real world, alongside prior knowledge and experience.
Relationships in an ecosystem (Biology)	The interdependence of organisms in an ecosystem, including food webs and insect pollinated crops. How organisms affect, and are affected by, their environment, including the accumulation of toxic materials.
Inheritance, chromosomes, DNA and genes (Biology)	Differences between species. Changes in the environment which may leave individuals within a species, and some entire species, less well adapted to compete successfully and reproduce, which in turn may lead to extinction. The importance of maintaining biodiversity.
<u>English</u>	
Writing	Writing for a wide range of purposes and audiences, including: well-structured formal expository and narrative essays; stories, scripts, poetry and other imaginative writing; notes and polished scripts for talks and presentations and a range of other narrative and non-narrative texts, including arguments, and personal and formal letters. Summarising and organising material, and supporting ideas and arguments with any necessary factual detail.
Spoken English	Speak confidently and effectively, including through: - giving short speeches and presentations, expressing their own ideas and keeping to the point. - participating in formal debates and structured discussions, summarising and/or building on what has been said.
<u>SMSC and British Values</u>	
SMSC and British Values	Enable pupils to distinguish right from wrong and to respect the civil and criminal law of England. Understand how they can contribute positively to the lives of those living and working in the locality of the school and to society more widely. Further tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions by enabling pupils to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures. Encourage respect for other people. Encourage respect for democracy and support for participation in the democratic processes, including respect for the basis on which the law is made and applied in England. An understanding of how citizens can influence decision-making through the

	democratic process.
<b>Citizenship</b>	
Citizenship	<p>The roles played by public institutions and voluntary groups in society, and the ways in which citizens work together to improve their communities, including opportunities to participate in school-based activities.</p> <p>The nature of rules and laws and the justice system, including the role of the police and the operation of courts and tribunals.</p>

\*Suggested topics. Not specified in the National Curriculum

<p><b>Lesson 1. Wild animals in the circus</b></p> <p><u>Context:</u> Wild animals have special features and behaviours that make them suited to a particular habitat. This lesson explores the adaptations of six animals commonly found in circuses across the world. It is designed to encourage the students to think about how an animal's life in a circus may be different to life in its natural habitat.</p>		
Learning objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To describe how different organisms are adapted to their environment</li> <li>• To explain why organisms succeed best in their own natural environments.</li> </ul>	
Resources	<p>PowerPoint 'Circuses Lesson 1. Wild animals in the circus'</p> <p>Resource pack 'Lesson 1. Wild animals in the circus'</p>	
Starter (slides 2 and 3)	10 mins	<p><u>Senses at the Circus</u></p> <p>Ask the students to close their eyes and imagine that they are going to the circus. Lead them through the senses of taste, sight, touch, smell and sound.</p> <p>Student's feedback to the teacher.</p> <p>Hands up: How many students imagined animals in the circus?</p> <p>Introduce the theme of the lesson - Are circuses an appropriate environment for wild animals?</p>
Introduction/ modelling (slide 4)	5 mins	<p><u>Adaptations</u></p> <p>Introduce the key term, 'adaptation'.</p> <p>Provide examples as necessary</p>
Teaching and learning activity 1 (slides 5-11)	10 mins	<p><u>Option 1</u></p> <p>Split the class into small groups (3 or 4).</p> <p>Give each group a different animal poster (found in the resource pack).</p> <p>Ask the students to annotate the animal, noting down the adaptations that make it particularly suited to its environment.</p> <p>Challenge: Can you identify the physical, social and behavioural adaptations?</p> <p>After 5 minutes, stop the activity and ask the group to feedback to</p>

		<p>the rest of the class.</p> <p><u>Option 2</u> Stick the posters from the resource pack onto the walls of the classroom. Students then move freely around the classroom and annotate them as above, on any posters they like. They have five minutes to work their way around the room. Challenge: Can you identify the physical, social and behavioural adaptations? Students then feedback to the teacher.</p>
Teaching and learning activity 2 (slides 12-19)	30 mins	<p><u>Option 1</u> Split the class into small groups (3 or 4). Hand out the animal adaptation cards (cut up and jumbled up in an envelope). The group must then try and work out which adaptations belong to which animal by grouping the cards together. Once they have the correct answers, they can take their favourite adaptations from each animal to create a new species. (Answers on slides 14-19).</p> <p><u>Option 2</u> Photocopy the animal adaptation sheets on to coloured card; one colour for each of the six different animals. (There are 36 clues altogether so this resource can be adapted to suit different class sizes). Each student is given a card and they must find each other in the classroom and then sit together. They should then decide which animal they have been given, before creating a poster about their animal. Groups then feedback to the class. (Answers on slides 14-19).</p>
Plenary (Slide)	5 mins	<p>Think, pair, and share: How do you think the circus is different to an animal's natural habitat? (For example, lights, noise, interaction with the audience and smells).</p>
Extension/ homework		<p>Students can research the adaptations of other wild animals at <a href="https://www.bornfree.org.uk/animals">https://www.bornfree.org.uk/animals</a> Research into UK circuses to find out which use wild animals in performances.</p>
Key words		<p>Adaptation; Habitat; Ecosystem; Evolution; Behaviour; Herbivorous; Omnivorous; Carnivorous; Sense.</p>

**Lesson 2. A day in the life of a tiger**

Context:

Despite difficulty in assessing living conditions, animal management practices and animal behaviour in circuses, it is evident the impact of circuses on animal welfare can be extremely serious. By their very nature, travelling circuses operate in such a way as to facilitate ease of frequent transport. Animals are transported from location to location in cramped conditions, repeatedly loaded and unloaded. They are often subjected to poor living conditions; confinement for long periods; lack of privacy; restricted movement (chaining and tethering); extreme temperatures; unnatural close contact with people (trainers, performers, and public); high noise levels; and abusive training methods. Animals used in circuses can experience both mental and physical suffering. Restrictive space and the boredom from a lack of environmental complexity can cause individual animals to develop unnatural and ‘stereotypic’ behaviours; contract disease from unhygienic conditions; and suffer for deficient diets. Circus animals may also face an uncertain future, when they grow too old or can no longer physically perform in shows.

Learning objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To compare the life of a tiger in the wild with one in a circus</li> <li>• To write a diary entry entitled ‘A day in the life of a tiger’.</li> </ul>	
Resources	PowerPoint ‘Circuses Lesson 2. A day in the life of a tiger’ Resource pack ‘Lesson 2. A day in the life of a tiger’.	
Starter (slides 2-3)	15 mins	<p><u>What can you remember about tigers?</u></p> <p>Students work in pairs or small groups to fill in four sections of the worksheet (see resource pack) with their prior knowledge on tigers (habitat, characteristics, threats and questions). (Characteristics were covered in the previous lesson. Students may have also read habitat information on the posters of the previous lesson).</p> <p>Read the text ‘Tigers in the Wild’ to the students. Ask them to listen carefully to the information. Instruct the students to add any extra information that they have found out on to their sheet in a different colour.</p>
Introduction/ modelling (slides 4-7)	20 mins	<p><u>The life of a circus tiger</u></p> <p>Divide the class into five groups and give each group different information about a feature of a circus tiger’s life (living conditions, freedom, training, performing and health and safety). Each group then has 10 minutes to read the information, discuss it and write down any notes to become ‘experts’ on their feature. After 10 minutes, rearrange the groups so that there is one ‘expert’ on each feature in each group. Students then teach the other members of their group about their feature.</p>

		Students then fill in the blank drawing of a tiger with their information. (They could even try making their words look like stripes).
Teaching and learning activity (slide 8)	20 mins	<p><u>A day in the life of a tiger</u></p> <p>Students choose <u>either</u> a wild or a circus tiger and write a diary entry about their day. Students should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include an introduction to set the scene and create atmosphere</li> <li>• Use adventurous vocabulary to describe the places where the events take place</li> <li>• Write in the first person but in the in the past tense</li> <li>• Use personal pronouns such as I, we, my, me - be the tiger</li> <li>• Talk about important events</li> <li>• Talk about feelings, reaction and opinions from the writers point of view</li> <li>• Use paragraphs to organise the events and write them in chronological order.</li> </ul> <p>Sentence starters, ideas for rhetorical questions and speculative sentence starters can be found in the resource pack.</p> <p>If you have time, it is great to have students read their diaries to the rest of class to reinforce the contrast between life in the wild and in the circus.</p>
Plenary (slide 9)	5 mins	<p>Students to write down:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head – Something that has made them think</li> <li>• Heart – Something that they have felt</li> <li>• Bin – Something that they did not find interesting</li> <li>• Bag – Something they will remember and take away.</li> </ul>
Extension/ homework		<p>Students can write a comparison diary entry for either a wild or a circus tiger, depending on which was chosen in the main activity.</p> <p>Students can research about the lives of other circus animals. The animals used in the previous lesson are all common in circuses that use wild animals.</p>
Key words		Habitat; Characteristics; Threats; Solitary; Carnivorous; Instincts; Natural behaviours; Endangered; Exploitation; Captivity; Stereotypic behaviour; Privacy; Empathy

### Lesson 3. Should all wild animals in circuses be banned?

Context: Not all countries have the same laws on using wild animals in circuses. Scotland and the Republic of Ireland banned this practice in December 2017 and January 2018 respectively. England, Wales and Northern Ireland are yet to introduce a ban, although the government has

<p>stated its intention to ban wild animals in travelling circuses in England by 2020 and the Welsh government is currently considering it's position (Nov 2018). There are currently two circuses in England which are licensed to use a total of 19 wild animals. In the European Union (EU) a wide range of wild animals are still being used to perform. These include lions, tigers, elephants, bears, giraffe, hippopotamus and rhinoceros.</p>		
<p>Learning objectives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To understand the arguments for and against banning wild animals in circuses</li> <li>• To form an opinion</li> <li>• To write a persuasive letter.</li> </ul>	
<p>Resources</p>	<p>PowerPoint 'Circuses Lesson 3. Should all wild animals in circuses be banned?' Resource pack 'Should all wild animals in circuses be banned?' (Cut up the 'for and against cards' and put them into envelopes prior to the lesson.)</p>	
<p>Starter (slides 2-4)</p>	<p>10 mins</p>	<p><u>What do these countries have in common?</u> Show the students the two flags on the PowerPoint Ask them to identify the countries and then the link. Answer: They have no type of ban, or commitment to ban the use of wild animals in circuses.</p> <p>Ask the students if wild animals in circuses are banned in the British Isles. England – Not yet. The government says it will be banned by Jan 2020. Wales – Not yet. The Welsh government is planning a ban and is consulting on this decision Northern Ireland – No. No date set for a ban. Republic of Ireland – Yes. Banned in Jan 2018. Scotland – Yes. Banned in Dec 2017.</p> <p>Discuss why some countries have not yet banned the use of wild animals in circuses. (e.g. historical use, tradition, lack of public awareness).</p>
<p>Introduction/ modelling (slide 5)</p>	<p>15 mins</p>	<p><u>The arguments for and against</u> In pairs, ask the students to try and think of three reasons for and against the use of wild animals in circuses.</p> <p>Hand out the for and against cards, cut up and in an envelope.</p> <p>Instruct the students to sort the cards into two piles; for and against. Then <u>rank</u> each pile from the strongest argument to the weakest.</p>

		Challenge: Who might argue for and against? Think about different groups and what their interests might be.
Teaching and learning activity (slides 6-7)	25 mins	<p><u>Carousel</u></p> <p>Place the statements around the classroom (see resource pack). Students move around the classroom in five groups, annotating each statement with their thoughts and feelings.</p> <p>Put a timer on the board and instruct the groups to move to the next statement after five minutes.</p> <p>Each group should write in a different colour to help the teacher track the comments.</p>
Plenary (slide 8)	10 mins	<p><u>Class vote</u></p> <p>'All countries should ban the use of wild animals in circuses'</p> <p>Introduce the motion to the class.</p> <p>Allow time to hear students' viewpoints.</p> <p>The vote can be carried out in a number of different ways, including hands up/down, stand up/sit down or moving to different corners of the room.</p>
Extension/homework (slides 9-10)		Write a letter to the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom to persuade the government to ban the use of wild animals in circuses in England, following the ban in Scotland.
Key words		Captivity; Legislation; Ban; Law; Parliament; MP; Persuasive writing

### Taking this issue further

- Tell people about what you have learnt today. [Share on Facebook](#), [Share on Twitter](#)
- Pledge not to visit a circus this year
- Tell us if you see captive exploitation
- Respect all animals, large or small
- Join Wild Crew – Born Free's kids club <https://www.bornfree.org.uk/kids-club>
- Fundraising – There are lots of ways for you to get involved and fundraise for Born Free. With our help, it's so easy to Go Wild with Born Free and raise funds! Hold your own Go Wild event or activity – big or small – and every single penny you raise will help Born Free care for animals. <https://www.bornfree.org.uk/fundraising>

Have you visited a zoo or other captive animal facility and seen poor conditions, cruel treatment or strange behaviour? Have you encountered animals being exploited in a circus or show, used for interaction activities or as 'souvenir' photographic props? Then let us know with our [Captive Animal Report Form](#).