Welcome to the writers’ circus!

Designed by Katrin Girgensohn, Franziska Liebetanz & Nadia Nejjar, Writing Center European University Viadrina, Frankfurt (Oder)/ Germany
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Contact: Writing Center European University Viadrina
www.europa-uni.de/schreibzentrum
schreibzentrum@europa-uni.de
Aims
Our motto is: Writing connects Writers. The Writers’ Circus provides an opportunity to get together in a rather unusual way. With the support of writing games and prompts, the circus fosters communication among the participants, fun and awareness for our writing processes.

Overview

The Writers’ Circus needs two to three hours:
• Start: Opening with initial hellos, circus music and explication of the coming actions. The five characters are introduced shortly: A clown, a tightrope-walker, an animal tamer, a magician and a juggler.
• Main Part: People choose one character and split into small groups. Tables dedicated to one of the characters are prepared with circus props and writing game instructions. Depending on the number of people, there will be more than one table for each character. Groups shouldn’t have more than seven participants. During the next hour, people collaborate in their groups. With support of writing games, they all deal with the theme “writing processes”. Finally, each group prepares a little show-act that presents results of their group work.
• Circus Show: All groups present their results as a common show.

The characters (Overview)

The juggler plays with gravity. He throws things in the air, spins them around, makes us see that things can be different than we thought. In this group you are jugglers. For the fifty minutes you will juggle with language, make words fly and give them a new shape.
Show-Result: Text, based on anagrams of “a writing process”

The clown always laughs. He is the one that makes fun on serious problems. He loves to create nonsense; he just wants to have fun. He is not likely to achieve perfect results, but this won’t bother him. He doesn’t care about other people’s opinions; he only wants them to laugh and to feel good. He often tries to imitate things he doesn’t understand, like riding on a horse like the ballerina but in the end sitting on it the other way around.
For the next fifty minutes you will be clowns, you will make fun of serious problems and play with language in new ways.

**Show-Result:** Soundperformance on writer’s block

The **tightrope walker** is dancing on a thin rope high in the air. She has to be highly concentrated and isn’t allowed to look to the right or left. Her trick is that she never stops. It would be impossible for her to balance on the rope while standing. So she always continues her motions, highly concentrated and in silence.

In your group you will be tightrope walkers for the next fifty minutes.

**Show-Result:** Paperstreamer-Performance

The **magician bedazzles us**. He is a mighty man. He lets rabbits emerge from hats, he lets women fly or bewitches cards. In reality it is all about hard work: the magician knows tricks and methods. He uses strategies and so everything seems to be easy. You never know how hard this man is working. Hours and hours he practises for his show. A good text works in the same way: you read it easily and don’t see the hard work behind it or the exercising years before it was written. And of course no one knows the strategies and methods, which were used.

For the next fifty minutes you will be magicians and write magical fairy tales. Writing together will be one secret strategy. You will help each other with new ideas. And of course it will be magic – magical things will help you to conclude the nicest fairytales!

**Show-Result:** Common Fairytale

The **animal tamer** has authority. Being severe enables him to control wild animals. He rules the chaos in the arena. He trains wild creatures and makes them behave the way he wants them to.

For the fifty minutes you will be tamers and find wild words that you force into a nice form.

**Show-Result:** Rondell (lyrical genre)

On the following pages you find material for printing out and putting it on the tables. Feel free to change or adopt it in accordance with creative commons license.
The Juggler

The juggler plays with gravity. He throws things in the air, spins them around, makes us see that things can be different than we thought they were.

In this group you are jugglers. For the next forty minutes you will juggle with language, make words fly and give them a new shape.
Please tell your name before starting.

Please find one person in your group that will watch the time and remind you to stop when time is up. It is important to watch the time because we would like to finish all groups at more or less the same time. Thank you!

First prompt: ANNAGRAM

Juggle with the letters of the term "A WRITING PROCESS". There is a card for everyone. Cut the words into letters and juggle them until you find new words. Write each new word down. After you found one word you can mix the letters again. Don't use other letters except the ones on your cards. Juggling time: 5 min.

Afterwards: Collect all words that you have found in your group. Write each word on one round juggling ball (= round card). Now you have word balls. 5 min.

Second prompt: The group juggles with all the words you have found. All together you create a story, a poem or a manifest that should contain all the words. Choose your own way of working.
Your text should be about writing and about juggling!
You have 15 min.

Please write your text on a flipchart paper. Use the word balls by gluing them in the places where the words show up.
10 min.

Think on how to present your results to the other groups. You might want to show this paper and read your story. We are going to have a common show of all groups and you are the jugglers.
5 min.

Enjoy!
The clown

The clown always laughs. He is the one that makes fun of serious problems. He loves to create non-sense, he just wants to have fun. He is not likely to achieve perfect results, but this won’t bother him. He doesn’t care about other people’s opinions, he only wants them to laugh and to feel good. He often tries to imitate things he doesn’t understand. E.g. riding on a horse like the ballerina but in the end sitting on it the other way around.

For the next forty minutes you will be clowns, you will make fun of serious problems and play with language in new ways.
Please tell your name before starting.

Please find one person in your group that will watch the time and remind you to stop when time is up. It is important to watch the time because we would like to finish all groups at more or less the same time. Thank you!

First prompt: "Writer's block" is the very serious problem you have to deal with as a clown. Do you remember situations in which you weren't able to write? Have a look at the pictures you find in the middle of the table. Choose one of them and try to find a connection: Do you see any relationship between, e.g., a banana and problems of writing? You can reveal your thoughts by doing some freewriting about the picture and writer’s block. You have five minutes to choose a picture and do some freewriting.

Now you become more abstract. Try to express your feelings concerning writer’s block and your picture with sounds only! Write a sound poem. Remember: You are a clown, you are allowed to do everything! So why not describe the relationship between a picture and writer’s block with sounds?

You have 10 min. for this.
Next prompt: All you clowns together prepare a sound performance on writer’s block. 
At first, one after another present his or her picture to the other clowns in the group and performs the individual sound poem.
Afterwards, you create a common sound performance based on all your individual ideas. A possibility might be that the individual clowns present their poems and the other clowns answer like a chorus.

10 min.

Now, prepare a presentation for the circus show!

Think on how to present your sound performance on writer’s block to the other groups. We are going to have a common show of all groups and you are the clowns.

One possibility would be to perform your common sound poem and illustrate it with the pictures you started with. For example, you could construct hats on which you glue the pictures - you find one example on the table.

You have 15 min. for this.

Enjoy!
The tightrope walker

*The tightrope walker is dancing on a thin rope high in the air. She has to be highly concentrated and isn't allowed to look at the right or the left side. Her trick is that she never stops moving. It would be impossible for her to balance on the rope while standing. So she always continues her motions, highly concentrated and in silence. In your group you will be tightrope walkers for the next forty minutes.*
Please tell your name before starting.

Please find one person in your group that will watch the time and remind you to stop when time is up. It is important to watch the time because we would like to finish all groups at more or less the same time. Thank you!

First prompt: Write automatically for five minutes. Like the tightrope walker you are concentrated on yourself. You mustn’t stop writing, your pen has to be in motion all the time. If your pen tends to stop, don’t allow it! In this case you write “tightrope walker, tightrope walker…” until other words emerge. Please start writing with the words “writing is like dancing on a tightrope” and then go on the way your pen conducts you.
Write in your mother tongue if you feel like it. Be aware that you won’t have to read your text afterwards if you don’t feel like reading it!
5 min.

Afterwards you discuss your experiences and ideas and/or read your texts to the group. How did it feel to dance on the rope without stopping? Did you find relationships between tightrope walking and writing or were your thoughts leading you to completely other topics?
You have 15 min. to discuss and read.

Second prompt: Altogether, you write a text on writing and tightrope walking. To symbolise the rope you will write your
text on a paper streamer. It is up to you if you want to write a story or if you want to summarise your discussion or whatever you like.
You have 15 min.

Prepare a presentation!
The last 5 min. think on how to present your results to the other groups. We are going to have a common show of all groups and you are the tightrope walkers.

Enjoy!
The magician

The magician bedazzles us. He is a mighty man. He lets rabbits emerge from hats, lets women fly or bewitches cards. In reality it is all about hard work: the magician knows tricks and methods. He uses strategies and so everything seems to be easy. You never know how hard this man is working. Hours and hours he practices for his show. A good text works in the same way: you read it easily and don’t see the hard work behind it or the years of exercise before it was written. And of course no one knows the strategies and methods, which were used.

For the next forty minutes you will be magicians and write magical fairy tales. Writing together will be one secret strategy. You will help each other with new ideas. And of course it will be magic – magical things will help you to conclude the nicest fairytales!
Please tell you name before starting.

Please find one person in your group that will watch the time and remind you to stop when time is up. It is important to watch the time because we would like to finish all groups at more or less the same time. Thank you!

First prompt: You write a fairytales on someone who wants to write but cannot. Please write the beginning of a story. Create a hero and introduce him, explain his or her problem. (Please write clearly because you will change the papers afterwards).
You have five minutes for the beginning of the story.

Second prompt: Please pass around the beginnings of the stories. You get your neighbours' story and continue it. You have to write the middle of this fairytale. How does the hero go on to solve his problem? Does he have enemies who want to stop him? The magical trunk in the middle of the table will help you to solve your hero's problems. Get one magical thing out of the trunk that will help your hero.
You have 10 min. for the middle part of the fairytale.

Third prompt: Again, please pass around the stories. Now you have a third fairytale that you conclude. Please find a happy ending and help your hero on managing his or her problem. You can use the magical trunk again.
You have 5 min. to write a happy ending.
Afterwards you read all fairytales. Select one or two stories to present them to the circus.
15 min.

Think on how to present your results to the other groups. We are going to have a common show of all groups and you are the magicians. You might want to put the magical things into the hat. While one or some persons read the fairytale you could conjure up the magical things from the hat.

Enjoy!
The animal tamer

The animal tamer has authority. Being severe enables him to control wild animals. He rules the chaos in the arena. He trains wild creatures and makes them behave the way he wants them to. 

*For the next forty minutes you will be tamers and find wild words that you force into a nice form.*
Please tell your name before starting.

Please find one person in your group that will watch the time and remind you to stop when time is up. It is important to watch the time because we would like to finish all groups at more or less the same time. Thank you!

First prompt: Firstly, each tamer has to find wild words related to writing. This means that you search metaphors to express feelings you have while writing. What do you feel? Anger? Joy? Please write these feelings in the left part of the table (red papers). Now find metaphors: If anger was a landscape: which landscape would it be? The Grand Canyon? Or a volcano? Write as many metaphors as you can imagine. You have 5 minutes to find wild words.

Second prompt: Now it is up to you to make your words behave! Like a tamer makes the lions jump through a hoop you will create a “rondell” with your metaphors. In this way you will force your feelings into a form. A rondell is a poem. On the yellow papers you find instructions and an example. Create a rondell on writer’s feelings. You have 15 minutes.

Afterwards present your poems to the group. You have ten minutes to hear all poems.

Third prompt: Now all you great tamers come together with your well-behaved wild words and prepare the show. On your
table you find a big hoop. Create a rondell all together by taking some lines out of your poems. Write a collaborative rondell on the hoop to present it to the circus. Think on how to present your results to the other groups. We are going to have a common show of all groups and you are the tamers.

You have 10 min. for this.

Enjoy!

Materials for Animal Tamer on the following pages!
## Table for Metaphors (first prompt)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feelings when I write</th>
<th>If my feeling was a landscape…</th>
<th>If my feeling was an animal…</th>
<th>If my feeling was something to eat…</th>
<th>If my feeling was a piece of furniture…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>frustration</td>
<td>landscape on the moon</td>
<td>a snail</td>
<td>hard, dry bread</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rondell

You write a rondell in sentences.
Certain sentences are repeated, so you get a "rolling" effect.

1. line - Here you introduce your theme, e.g. the feeling you write about.
2. line - explain the theme
3. line - another property in one sentence
4. line - repeat line one
5. line - another explanation in one sentence
6. line - add another explanation
7. line - repeat line one
8. line - repeat line two

Example:

**On writing a paper**

Writing can be frustrating.
My text seems to be a landscape on the moon.
My words creep on the paper, as slowly as a snail.
Writing can be frustrating.
It is like chewing hard, dry bread.
I can't get it down in my stomach nor can I spit it out.
Writing can be frustrating.
My text seems to be a landscape on the moon.