

NEW VICTORY®

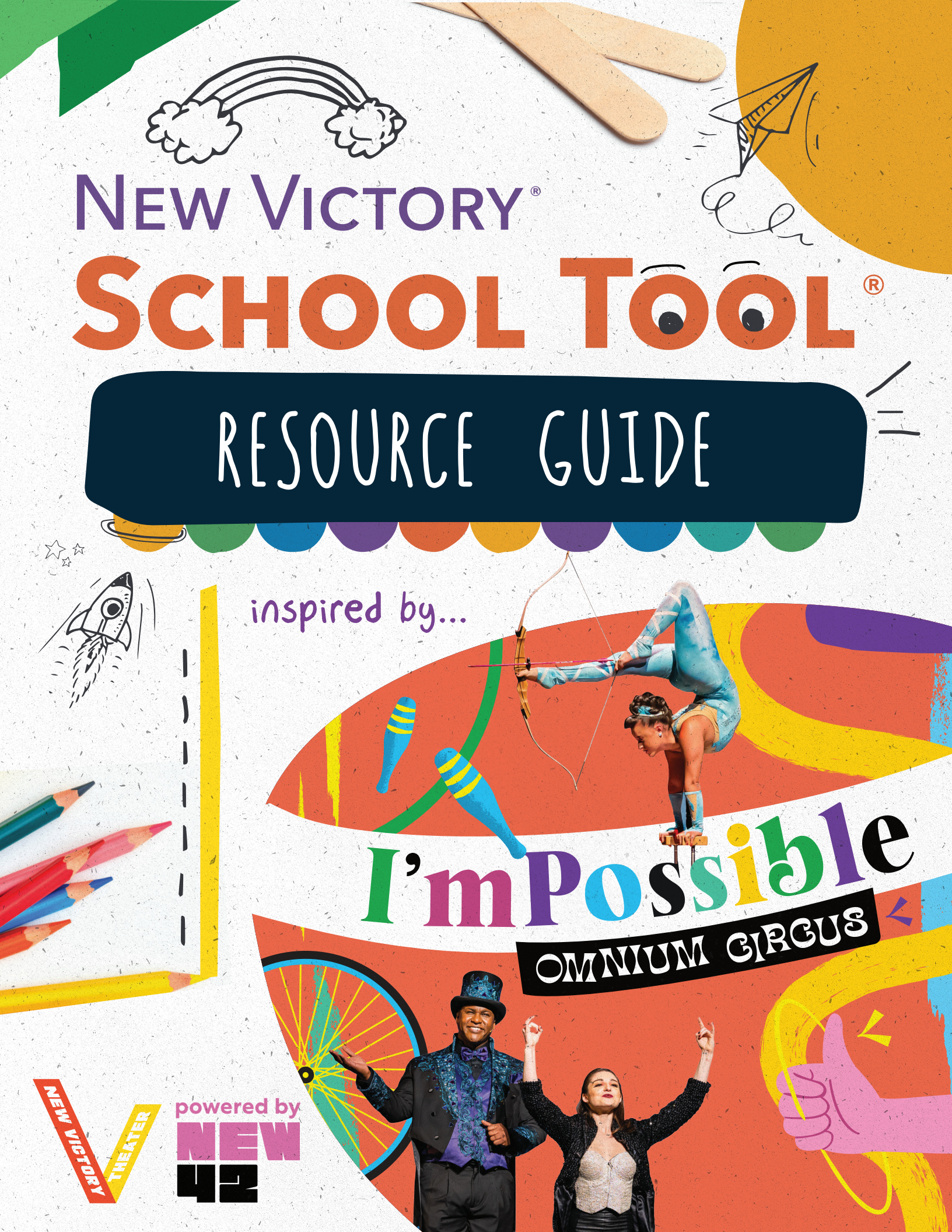
SCHOOL TOOL®

RESOURCE GUIDE

inspired by...

I'mPossible

OMNIVUM CIRCUS



NEW VICTORY® EDUCATION

209 W 42nd Street, New York, NY 10036 • Education_Tickets@NewVictory.org | 646.223.3090



Bringing kids to the arts and the arts to kids since 1995, New Victory opens new worlds to young people and families through extraordinary performances, education and engagement programs both online and in its historic Times Square theater.

Powered by New 42, a cultural nonprofit dedicated to empowering artists, educators and families through the performing arts, New Victory served 138 schools and 20,000 NYC kids through performances, classroom workshops, teacher professional development and resources in the 2022-23 school year.

Featuring artistic disciplines and traditions from a multitude of cultures, New Victory has become a standard-bearer of quality performing arts for young audiences in the United States with theatrical stories and experiences that spark the imagination and broaden our understanding of the world and our place in it.

NEW VICTORY® SCHOOL TOOL® Resource Guides

Filled with practical, engaging and ready-to-implement activities that allow any teacher to incorporate performing arts into their curricula, NEW VICTORY SCHOOL TOOL Resource Guides are designed to enrich students' arts skills and creative expression.

Jobs for Young People

Discover the NEW 42 Youth Corps, a youth development program that pairs life skills training with jobs in the arts for high school and college students. Designed to meet students where they are, New 42 Youth Corps provides flexible paid employment through a mix of on the job experience as well as personal, academic and professional development through a series of workshops, speakers and networking opportunities.



Under the leadership of President & CEO Russell Granet, New 42 is a leading performing arts nonprofit whose mission is to make extraordinary performing arts a vital part of everyone's life from the earliest years onward.

Through our signature projects, New Victory and New 42 Studios, we serve young people, artists and educators with invaluable arts engagement and resources in and beyond the performing arts.



Support for New Victory Education has been provided by:

Con Edison, Muna & Basem Hishmeh Foundation, Kennedy Center VSA, The Pierre and Tana Matisse, Foundation, New York City Council, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, New York City Department of Education, New York Community Trust, New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature, May and Samuel Rudin Family Foundation, Adolph and Ruth Schnurmacher Foundation, Inc.



Council on the Arts

NEW VICTORY® SCHOOL TOOL® Resource Guides are made possible by a generous gift in memory of Fr. John R. Scarangelo, OFM whose lifelong passion for the theater was a powerful influence on all who were fortunate to know and love him.



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The content in this NEW VICTORY®
SCHOOL TOOL® Resource Guide
aligns with:

NEXT GENERATION LEARNING STANDARDS

Reading: 1; 2; 3

Writing: 2; 3

Speaking and Listening: 1; 2; 3; 4; 5; 6

Language: 1; 2; 3

NEW YORK STATE LEARNING STANDARDS FOR THE ARTS

Creating, Performing,
Responding, Connecting

BLUEPRINT FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING IN THE ARTS

Theater: Theater Making,
Developing Theater Literacy,
Making Connections

Visual Arts: Art Making,
Developing Art Literacy,
Making Connections



inspired by...

I'm Possible

OMNIVUM CIRCUS

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Learn and Engage



This section is an introduction to the artists, company, art forms and themes of this production. It also contains unit plan brainstorms, inspired by the production, that provide opportunities to begin thinking about the cultural, thematic and artistic elements of the show.



THE SHOW, THE ART FORMS AND INFO TO KNOW

What's the Show About?

I'mPossible is the story of a young girl who has a dream to join the circus. She confronts a world full of challenges and through a death-defying, awe-inspiring, madcap circus adventure discovers the strength, courage and perseverance that changes her life forever. Join the circus among an awe-inspiring, inclusive ensemble featuring an award-winning gymnast who uses a wheelchair, an aerialist born without legs, a Deaf storyteller and many more.

Modern Circus

Modern circus has a variety of skills like acrobatics, juggling, clowning and other physical feats. Although traditional circus is often performed under a tent and includes both human and animal acts, many modern circuses are performed on a stage and do not use animals as part of the performance. *I'mPossible* is a modern circus that showcases a diverse cast in traditional circus acts like aerial dance, juggling, acrobatics and clowning in ways that are accessible for every type of audience.

Acrobatics

In *I'mPossible*, elements of acrobatics, athleticism and dance are combined and used as a means of storytelling. Acrobatic performance entails feats of strength, agility, coordination and balance. Examples of acrobatics are when performers are seen climbing atop one another, flipping over each other and using each other as human counterweights. This type of performance dates back to the Minoan civilization around 2000 B.C.E., when everyday citizens would perform acrobatic feats on top of bulls, either for sport or ritual!

Clowning

Clowning is an ancient form of theater that is rooted in physical comedy. This art form embraces and highlights the absurdity of everyday situations and has the power to transcend verbal language and cultural barriers through visual spectacle. While clowning has origins that stem all the way from Ancient Egypt and Rome, it has direct ties to the European court jester that was popularized during the Middle Ages. These jesters performed comically and mocked societal norms to allow people to see themselves more clearly.

Unicycling

A unicycle is a human-powered vehicle similar to a bicycle, except it only has one wheel! Originating from the Penny-farthing bicycle in the 1800s, the unicycle is popular in many circus acts. Unicycling can be seen by the King Charles Troupe, the first American Black circus troupe in the nation that originated from the South Bronx. This troupe plays an entire game of basketball while all their members ride unicycles! They even have a street named after them — “King Charles Unicycle Troupe Way” sits on E. 170 St. in the Bronx.

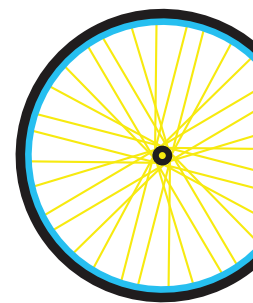
What do your students already know?

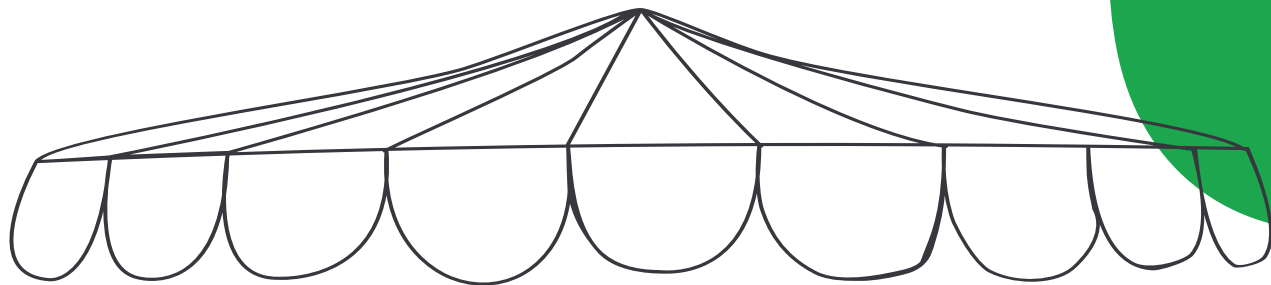
Ask your students questions to find out how much they already know about the art forms and themes of the show. Some questions to start with are:

Have you ever seen a circus before? How would you describe the experience?

What does it mean to make something that is accessible for everyone?

Have you ever achieved anything you thought was impossible? How did you achieve it?





CONTEXT TO CONSIDER

The Latin word “Omnium” means “of all and belonging to all.” Omnium: A Bold New Circus is a visionary not-for-profit organization bringing together a diverse cast of extraordinary talent from all over the globe, representing ten different countries. Uniquely unified, multitalented, multi-racial, and multi-abled, their stars transport audiences into a world of jaw-dropping spectacle and wonder, inspiring them with extraordinary feats of human accomplishment and the astounding potential of the human spirit. Founded in 2020 by Lisa B. Lewis, Omnium sees the future of circus as a force for unity and systemic change, leading a global movement by example with the first comprehensively inclusive circus company in the country.



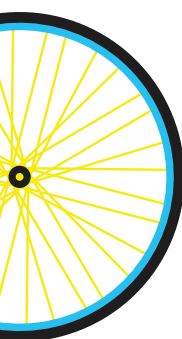
What it Means to be Inclusive

- Each show will be simultaneously presented in English and American Sign Language.
- Every performance is a relaxed environment, meaning all expression, including movement and vocalization are welcome at any time.
- *I'mPossible* has sensory-friendly lighting and sound, meaning that no sound level will exceed 90 decibels and no lights will strobe or shine into the audience.
- Fidgets and ear defenders are available at every show.
- A calming corner and activity area downstairs with a live feed of the show will be available for audience members that need a break.
- At every performance of *I'mPossible*, there are headsets available with a complete audio description of the show. Audio description is a verbal narration by which blind and visually impaired people experience and access art and media forms that are typically considered to be predominantly visual in nature. Please request in advance if you'd like to utilize this service

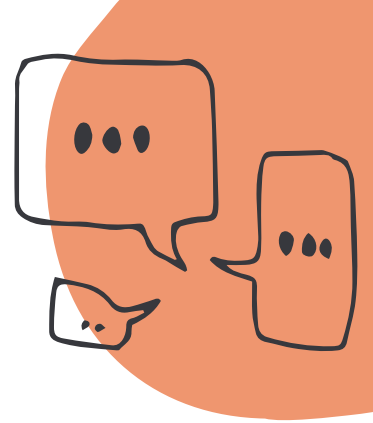
Why Does This Matter?

Twenty-five percent of all Americans, or about 83 million people, have a disability, visible or invisible. At any performance, event or class, it's more likely than not that someone with a disability will be participating, so making sure that everyone feels comfortable existing in your space and engaging with your content is essential. Providing options, like a cozy break zone or noise-canceling headsets, gives people the option to choose an experience that's best for them, and that doesn't just mean disabled people. Everyone can benefit from accessibility. By creating an inclusive and positive environment, both students and adults with and without disabilities can be set up for success and community.

Want to make events or performances at your school more inclusive and accessible? Use this [creating an accessible event](#) resource from the [GIVE Guide](#), an online library of resources created in collaboration with New Victory, Community Word Project and ArtsConnection.



UNIT PLAN BRAINSTORM



Accessibility? Yes! (English Language Arts, Theater)

Part of the beauty of the arts is sharing it with the community around you! That's why it's important to make sure that every presentation can be experienced by every type of audience. Work with your students to brainstorm what makes a performance accessible and eventually bring this change to your school. Start with a classroom discussion on what the word "accessibility" means and how it can be created. Once you have that definition, source some barriers to accessibility in your school or community from your students, using this [GIVE checklist](#) as a guide. Once you've done that, turn your focus to an event coming up at your school; this could be a recital, science fair or school assembly. Brainstorm with your students how you can make this event more accessible, taking into account the audience attending, the physical space and the content presented. Come up with at least three actionable items to promote accessibility and bring them to your school's administration. Then, have your class help see these items through, whether that's through keeping in contact with staff to make sure the changes are implemented or creating signage for the day of. When it's done, you'll have taught your students how to think about everyday accessibility and made a direct impact on your own community.

To support this unit, use the Context to Consider Page in the Learn and Engage section.

Representation Matters (English Language Arts, History, Theater)

A quarter of America's population has a disability, but often artists with disabilities are not highlighted in mainstream media. Take some time with your class to learn about some famous trailblazers in history and culture that also have disabilities. Start by leading a conversation about disability history and justice in your classroom. Some topics to start with are the Americans with Disabilities Act and the idea of the social model of disability, which can be explored in depth utilizing the [Disability Rights and Education History resource at TeachwithGIVE.org](#). After your class has a basic understanding of disability justice in America, ask each student to pick an area of interest to them—this could be theater, sports, activism, visual arts or music. Then, have them research a pioneer in that field with a disability, including where they come from, their career achievements and fun facts. You can also use the [Inclusive Curriculum & Showcasing Artists with Disabilities resource at TeachwithGIVE.org](#) to get your students started. Once everyone's research is finished, have everyone present their chosen person to the class. Use this knowledge as a way to follow and uplift the work of artists with disabilities throughout the rest of the year.

To support this unit, use the YOUnique Creativity Page in the Discover and Create section.

Cirque du Science (Science, Theater)

Acrobatics, aerial dancing, stilt walking... all these circus tricks may seem like magic, but they're really just science in motion! Work with your students to explore the physics embedded in this art form. Start by exploring the concept of gravity and the basic laws that surround it. Demonstrate how gravity works on simple classroom objects and then lead discussions afterward. Next, start to embody the laws of gravity in your own body! Have students try to balance on one leg, balance a book on their head or jump as high as they can, and then explain how gravity impacted each movement. You may also want to dive into concepts like center of gravity, velocity and centripetal force to help supplement these scientific findings. Once you've experimented with physics in the classroom, let your students choose a video of a seemingly impossible circus act, and, using their newfound knowledge, use gravity to help explain how it's possible. **Bonus:** Try to recreate a simple circus stunt like juggling or weight sharing in your classroom (safely, of course) now that you know some of the science behind it!

To support this unit, use the Circus of the Classroom Stars Activity in the Respond and Connect section.

Discover and Create



In this section are ready-to-facilitate activities and kid-centered creativity pages which provide opportunities to delve a bit deeper into the themes and artistry of the show!

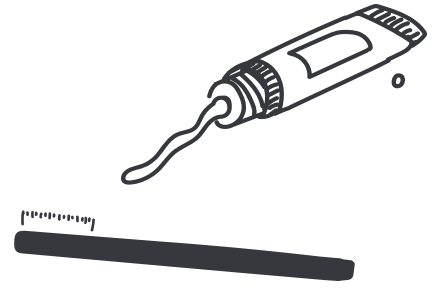


Activity

Making Silly Moments Out of Everyday Movements

Use the activity below to explore elements of circus through everyday activities.

1. Gather students in a circle and let them know you're going to explore a routine movement they do every day—but there's a twist! Instead of using their whole bodies, students will focus on just one part of their bodies and create a "Routine Talent Show" that showcases these newfound ways of making fun moments out of everyday activities.
2. Ask students to think through their daily routine and choose one activity they perform each day such as getting dressed, brushing their teeth or styling their hair. Emphasize that they'll be using their creativity to explore different ways of performing this activity using various parts of their bodies.
3. Invite students to brainstorm three different ways they might perform their chosen activity using a different body part for each variation. For example, they could imagine brushing their teeth with the inside of their elbow or styling hair using only one finger from each hand. **Bonus:** To add a bit of clowning into the mix, invite students to end their activity with a **take** to the audience!
4. Once they've finalized their activity, put students in small groups and invite them to collaborate and develop their talent show performances by combining their individual talents into a collective silly act.
5. Hold space for groups to brainstorm ideas and rehearse their acts. Encourage them to experiment with different movements, facial expressions and how they interact with one another to make their routines engaging and entertaining.
6. After each group has had time to rehearse their act, choose a stage area and create an act list for your "Routine Talent Show."
7. Invite another class to watch each group as they showcase their everyday routines in silly ways!



Words to Know:

Take: the moment when a clown looks at their audience to share the emotion that they're feeling, usually in a big (and sometimes silly) way.

Reflection Questions:

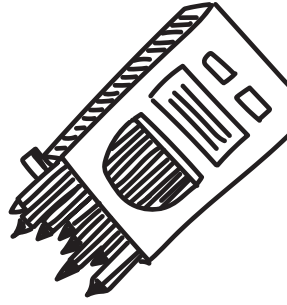
How did it feel to explore familiar activities in new and creative ways?

What did you learn about yourself and your classmates through this activity?



YOUUnique!

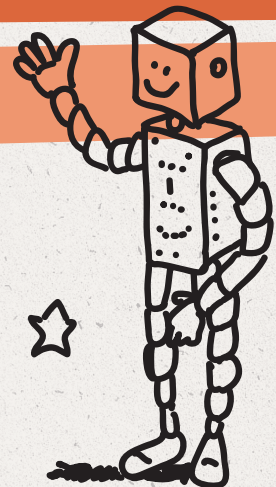
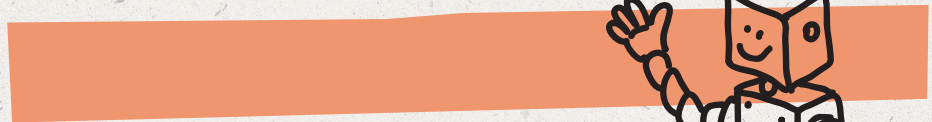
Have you ever wondered what makes you one-of-a-kind? Close your eyes and imagine all the things that make you special—your talents, hobbies, favorite things and even the quirks that make you, well, you! Now, grab crayons, colored pencils and markers and bring that uniqueness to life in the blank canvas below. Draw yourself surrounded by all those special things that make you uniquely you, and watch as your artwork shines with your individuality!



Arts Break @ Home



To bring the arts home, share this section with families. Arts Break supports family engagement with exciting activities for the whole family!



Be a part of your kid's viewing experience!



Ask

Ask your kid **BEFORE** they see the show:

- ▶ How do you think the performers in *I'mPossible* discovered their circus talents?

Ask your kid **AFTER** they see the show:

- ▶ What emotions did you feel while watching *I'mPossible*?

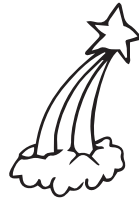


Watch

Now, [watch the trailer for *I'mPossible*](#). Then, utilize the next page to engage even more!

Engage

Visit New Victory Arts Break to bring exciting art-making experiences into your home!





Respond and Connect



The activities and creativity pages invite young people to reflect on the experience of seeing a live show (if applicable), and provide opportunities to make connections to themselves, each other and the world around them.



Reflection

Engage in a conversation with your students to help them process their thoughts and feelings about the show. On a large piece of chart paper, draw the outline of a person. On the outside of the outline, have students write or draw their favorite moments from the show. On the inside of the outline, have students write or draw their own feelings about the show and what emotions they felt during the show. Then, use some of the questions below to lead students in a discussion:



What was the story about?

In what ways was the story told?

Who were your favorite performers and why?

What were your favorite circus acts and why?

What emotions did you feel why watching the show?



Teacher Tip

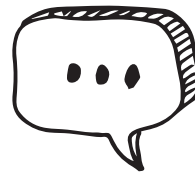
Engaging in dialogue, asking questions and recalling observations are skills that we believe should be fostered and encouraged. When leading a performance reflection discussion, try the following model of critical response:

Describe (*I noticed...*)

Analyze (*I wonder...*)

Interpret (*I think/feel...*)

Evaluate (*I believe...*)



Critic's Notebook



Headline: _____

What I noticed and what surprised me:

How the show made me feel:

What mood were you in after the show? What about the show made you feel that way?

My Opinion:

Consider the music, set, costumes and lighting:



Circus of the Classroom Stars



Use this activity to imagine and design your very own classroom circus!

Materials Needed: butcher paper, markers, construction paper, props or open-ended materials

1. Begin by asking students to form small groups. Let them know they'll be imagining themselves as part of a traveling circus troupe, and imagining and creating a daring act of their very own (safely!).
2. First, using butcher paper and markers, work with your students to generate a list of circus acts like juggling, tightrope walking, acrobatics and clowning. Next to that, generate a list of locations a circus could take place like a circus tent, an arena, a city street or a stage.
3. Work with these small groups to brainstorm what their act looks and feels like. Then, ask them to create a physical representation of their act by creating a tableau (frozen picture) with their bodies. Next, ask groups to think about where their circus takes place and what style of music might accompany their performance (e.g., a circus act that takes place inside a subway car in which a troupe of performers juggles empty soda cans while classical music plays).
4. Provide materials such as paper, markers and simple props for students to sketch their circus setting.
5. Once the groups have finalized their acts, invite one volunteer from each group to be the presenter and describe their act clearly while the rest of the group holds their frozen picture. After all groups have presented, take a moment to celebrate their creativity!

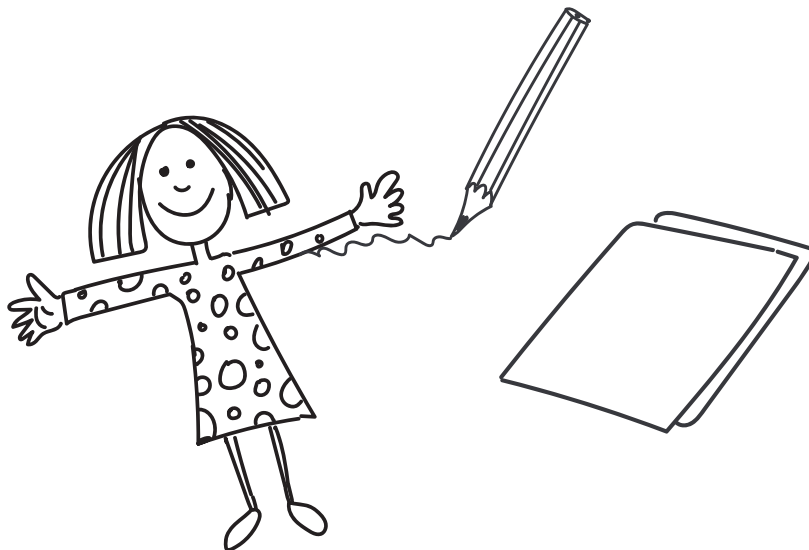


Reflection Questions:

What did you find most challenging about designing your circus act?

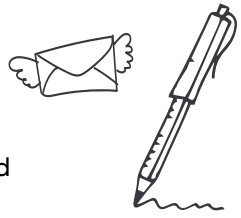
How did your group collaborate to come up with ideas and create the tableau?

What did you learn about teamwork and creativity from this activity?



The Strength In Me

Think of something you thought you wouldn't be able to do that you eventually accomplished. Remember when you thought it was nearly impossible? Yet, here you are, victorious. Your resilience, determination and unwavering belief in yourself have led you to this moment. In a letter to yourself, take a moment to reflect on that achievement and to celebrate your strength. Once you've completed it, keep that letter for yourself as a reminder of all that you're capable of.



Dear Me,

Lined writing area for the letter.

With pride and admiration,



Sources

COMPANY

Omnium Circus

CONTENT & THEMES

CNN | Chinese Street-Dancing Stilt Walkers

Getty | Stilt-Walking Actors Extend Their Stay at Getty Villa

Teach with GIVE

Inclusive Curriculum & Showcasing Artists with Disabilities

Disability Rights & Education History

Checklist: Creating an Accessible Culminating Event

WBUR + NPR | A Bird's Eye History of Walking on Stilts

PRODUCTION PHOTOS

Maike Schulz



Our Guiding Pillars



The Guiding Pillars on this page are the foundation of the ways in which NEW VICTORY Education strives to cultivate collaboration and creativity for everyone. As we continue to grow and evolve, so do our pillars, and we continue to rethink their meaning and overall impact. We hope these values offer inspiration as you engage in creative art-making through the unit plan brainstorms, activities and creativity pages in this NEW VICTORY® SCHOOL TOOL® Resource Guide!

Arts for All

Invite everyone to create art in ways that are accessible to and inclusive of everyone.

Art Form

Honor and explore the technique of the art forms represented in the works we present.

Community

Encourage ensemble and collaboration within the communities with which we engage.

Create

Activate art-making and creativity to explore the art form in each production and beyond.

Discovery

Employ methods and ask questions that encourage opportunities for curiosity, risk-taking, inquiry, meaning-making, deepening understanding, and learning about oneself, one's peers and the world around us.

Play

Spark imagination, encourage joy in learning and evoke laughter.

A Land Acknowledgement

The New Victory Theater is on the island known as Mannahatta, now called Manhattan, in Lenapehoking, the homeland of the Lenape people. These lands are intertribal trade lands under the stewardship of many Nations, and New Victory acknowledges the systematic erasure of their true history.

The land of the five boroughs that make up New York City was and still is inhabited by the Lenape, Merrick, Canarsie, Rockaway and Matinecock Nations. We celebrate and pay deep respect to the Peoples of these Nations, their cultures, their communities, their elders past and present, those with us today, and all their future generations.

We recognize that seized lands are historically inhabited by people who are racialized, marginalized and displaced by those in power, and we offer this land acknowledgement as a step in reexamining our relationship to that history. We offer our gratitude to the Indigenous peoples of many the Nations who continue to act as stewards of the land, and we encourage you to learn more about these vibrant communities.



Photo: Mark LaRosa