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Disneyland celebrates 50th birthday

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18 July, 2005

THE ARTICLE

Disneyland celebrates 50th birthday

BNE: Disneyland celebrated its 50th birthday on Sunday. Thousands of fans and celebrities gathered at what Disney calls the "happiest place on Earth" for a giant party. Walt Disney opened the world's first large-scale theme park on July 17, 1955. It started a whole new world of fantasy and family fun. An amazing 515 million fun seekers have since visited Disneyland. Walt Disney's idea has been copied around the world by thousands of others, all wanting to make money from the riches in this money-spinning industry.

From its small beginnings, Disney has mushroomed into a global entertainment empire. It has become one of the most famous and well known brands in history. It has created everything from blockbuster movies to children's stationery. Theme parks have spread across the world in Paris, Japan and very soon Hong Kong. It is almost impossible to walk around any city and not see Mickey Mouse in some shape or form. However, while the idea of providing pleasure has not changed, park admission prices have: the one-dollar ticket in 1955 is now \$56.

WARM-UPS

1. DISNEY – THE BEST? Is Disney the best? In pairs / groups, discuss the following:

- a. Characters – Is Mickey Mouse the world's most loveable cartoon character?
- b. Theme parks – Is Disneyland the world's greatest theme park?
- c. Animated movies – Are movies such as Bambi, Aladdin and the Lion King the best?
- d. The company – Is the Disney company the happiest company in the world?
- e. For kids – Is Disney the perfect form of entertainment for kids?
- f. For adults – Are Disney T-shirts the best way of reliving your childhood?

How does Disney compare with theme parks, characters and movies from your country?

2. QUICK DEBATE: Students A love Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck. Students B hate Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck. Try to persuade each other to switch sides.

3. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

Disneyland / 50th birthdays / Walt Disney / theme parks / fantasy / family fun / global brands / EuroDisney / Hong Kong Disneyland / Mickey Mouse

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

4. DISNEY: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with Disney. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

5. DISNEY OPINIONS: In pairs / groups, discuss the following opinions on Disney:

- a. Disney is the greatest American cultural asset.
- b. Disney sucks.
- c. Disney has brought incredible joy into the lives of billions of children.
- d. I'm fed up with seeing Mickey Mouse.
- e. Disney truly is the happiest company in the world.
- f. Disney's originality and creativity died thirty years ago.
- g. Every home should have Disney products.
- h. Disney is just a money-making machine that exports American ideas.
- i. Disney provides fantasy. There's nothing wrong with that.
- j. Disney will not last another 50 years.

Change partners and share what you talked about.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- | | |
|---|-------|
| a. Disneyland opened five decades ago. | T / F |
| b. Disney says Disneyland is the happiest place on Earth. | T / F |
| c. Five billion people have visited Disneyland. | T / F |
| d. Thousands of copycats have made money from Disney's ideas. | T / F |
| e. Disney once experimented in the global mushroom business. | T / F |
| f. Disney is one of the world's most ubiquitous brands. | T / F |
| g. You are likely to see the Mickey Mouse logo in every world city. | T / F |
| h. Admission prices have increased 56 fold since 1955. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------|
| a. gathered | virtually |
| b. amazing | wealth |
| c. copied | expanded |
| d. riches | unbelievable |
| e. money-spinning | giving |
| f. small | congregated |
| g. mushroomed | humble |
| h. created | profitable |
| i. almost | replicated |
| j. providing | made |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| a. Disneyland celebrated | money |
| b. a whole new world | a global entertainment empire |
| c. Walt Disney's idea has been | pleasure has not changed |
| d. make | industry |
| e. money-spinning | across the world |
| f. mushroomed into | well known brands |
| g. most famous and | its 50th birthday |
| h. spread | or form |
| i. see Mickey Mouse in some shape | of fantasy and family fun |
| j. the idea of providing | copied around the world |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

WHICH WORD? Delete the word you think is incorrect from the pairs in *italics*.

Disneyland celebrates 50th birthday

BNE: Disneyland *celebrated* / *celebration* its 50th birthday on Sunday.

Thousands of fans and *celebrities* / *celery* gathered at what Disney calls the "happiest place on Earth" for a giant party. Walt Disney opened the world's first large-scale *theme* / *thyme* park on July 17, 1955. It started a whole new world of fantasy and family fun. An amazing 515 million fun *lookers* / *seekers* have since visited Disneyland. Walt Disney's idea has been copied around the world by thousands of others, all wanting to make money from the riches in this *cotton-spinning* / *money-spinning* industry.

From its *small* / *gigantic* beginnings, Disney has mushroomed into a global entertainment *empire* / *emperor*. It has become one of the most famous and well known brands in history. It has created everything from blockbuster movies to children's *stationary* / *stationery*. Theme parks have spread across the world in Paris, Japan and very soon Hong Kong. It is almost impossible to walk around any city and not see Mickey Mouse in some shape or *farm* / *form*. However, while the idea of providing pleasure has not changed, park *admit* / *admission* prices have: the one-dollar ticket in 1955 is now \$56.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'giant' and 'party'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. WHICH WORD? In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...? What was the relationship between the words in each pair?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT DISNEY SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about Disney.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- celebrated
- giant
- first
- amazing
- copied
- riches
- mushroomed
- brands
- across
- almost
- providing
- admission

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. What did you think when you first read this headline?
- b. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- c. Do you like Disney?
- d. What part has Disney played in your life?
- e. Is there anything about Disney you hate?
- f. Have you been to or would you like to go to any Disney theme parks?
- g. What do you do to escape?
- h. What do you think is the secret to Disney's success?
- i. What do you think of Mickey Mouse?
- j. What will / did you do for your fiftieth birthday?

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What did you think about what you read?
- c. How do Disney's movies compare to those from other countries?
- d. Have you ever bought Disney products?
- e. Do you think Walt Disney was a genius?
- f. Do you think Disney is America's greatest cultural asset?
- g. Is \$56 too much for a ticket to enter a theme park?
- h. What message do you think Disney sends to children and adults?
- i. Would you like to work for the Disney company?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
- b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- c. Was there a question you didn't like?
- d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- e. What did you like talking about?
- f. Do you want to know how anyone else answered the questions?
- g. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

THE NEXT 50 YEARS: You are part of the team to make sure Disney survives for another 50 years. Your job is to make everything in Disney as futuristic as possible. Look at the present image. What is the competition? What is needed to give a more high-tech, modern image?

PRODUCT	PRESENT IMAGE	THE COMPETITION	THE FUTURE
Mickey Mouse			
Theme parks			
Animated movies			
Stores			
Other			

Change partners and give feedback on your ideas.

Return to your original partners. Use the feedback you got to make your original ideas better.

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Disneyland celebrates 50th birthday

BNE: Disneyland _____ its 50th birthday on Sunday. Thousands of fans and celebrities gathered at what Disney calls the "happiest place ____ _____" for a giant party. Walt Disney opened the world's first _____-_____ theme park on July 17, 1955. It started a whole new world of _____ and family fun. An amazing 515 million fun _____ have since visited Disneyland. Walt Disney's idea has been copied around the world by thousands of others, all wanting to make money from _____ in this money spinning industry.

From its small _____, Disney has mushroomed into a global entertainment empire. It has become one of the most famous and well known _____ in history. It has created everything from _____ movies to children's stationery. Theme parks have spread across the world in Paris, Japan and very soon Hong Kong. It is _____ to walk around any city and not see Mickey Mouse in some _____ . However, while the idea of providing pleasure has not changed, park _____ prices have: the one-dollar ticket in 1955 is now \$56.

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information on Disney's entertainment empire. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

3. WALT DISNEY: Make a poster on Walt Disney. Show your poster to your classmates in your next lesson and explain what you found out about him.

4. LETTER: Write a letter to the head of the CEO of Disney. Explain what you think of the company as it celebrates its 50th birthday. Give advice on what you think it should do to get better in the next 50 years. Read your letter to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

a. T b. T c. F d. T e. F f. T g. T h. T

SYNONYM MATCH:

a. gathered	congregated
b. amazing	unbelievable
c. copied	replicated
d. riches	wealth
e. money-spinning	profitable
f. small	humble
g. mushroomed	expanded
h. created	made
i. almost	virtually
j. providing	giving

PHRASE MATCH:

a. Disneyland celebrated	its 50th birthday
b. a whole new world	of fantasy and family fun
c. Walt Disney's idea has been	copied around the world
d. make	money
e. money-spinning	industry
f. mushroomed into	a global entertainment empire
g. most famous and	well known brands
h. spread	across the world
i. see Mickey Mouse in some shape	or form
j. the idea of providing	pleasure has not changed

WHICH WORD?

Disneyland celebrates 50th birthday

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