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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 as tens of thousands of fans and celebrities congregated at what Disney calls the "happiest place on earth" for a giant party. Cartoon pioneer Walt Disney opened the world's first large-scale theme park on July 17, 1955, to usher in a whole new world of fantasy, escapism and family fun. His inspiration was a more modest park called Fairyland, which opened in San Francisco in 1950. A mind-boggling 515 million fun seekers have since visited Disneyland. His idea was to be copied around the world by thousands of other leisure park operators, all wanting to cash in on the riches offered by the lucrative new industry.

From its humble beginnings, Disney has mushroomed into a global entertainment empire that has become one of the most ubiquitous brands in history. It has spawned everything from blockbuster movies to children's stationery and theme parks across the world in Paris, Japan and very soon Hong Kong. It is virtually impossible to walk around any city of any size and not encounter Mickey Mouse in some shape or form. It is fitting testimony to the genius of Walt Disney that his idea for family entertainment is still thriving five decades on. While the ideal of pure pleasure and enjoyment has not changed, 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:

1. Characters – Is Mickey Mouse the world's most loveable cartoon character?
2. Theme parks – Is Disneyland the world's greatest theme park?
3. Animated movies – Are movies such as Bambi, Aladdin and the Lion King the best?
4. The company – Is the Disney company the happiest company in the world?
5. For kids – Is Disney the perfect form of entertainment for kids?
6. 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 / 50<sup>th</sup> birthdays / Walt Disney / theme parks / escapism / 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 values.
- i. Disney provides escapism. 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. Walt Disney's inspiration for Disneyland was a German town.      | T / F |
| d. Thousands of copycats cashed in on Disney's lucrative idea.      | 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 over the years.          | T / F |

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

- |                  |                  |
|------------------|------------------|
| a. congregated   | flourishing      |
| b. usher         | humble           |
| c. modest        | remunerative     |
| d. mind-boggling | appropriate      |
| e. lucrative     | proliferated     |
| f. mushroomed    | gathered         |
| g. spawned       | incomprehensible |
| h. fitting       | proof            |
| i. testimony     | guide            |
| j. thriving      | originated       |

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

- |                               |                              |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| a. tens of                    | 515 million fun seekers      |
| b. usher in                   | global entertainment empire  |
| c. His inspiration was a more | on the riches                |
| d. A mind-boggling            | beginnings                   |
| e. cash in                    | a whole new world of fantasy |
| f. From its humble            | testimony                    |
| g. mushroomed into a          | thousands of fans            |
| h. in some shape              | five decades on              |
| i. fitting                    | modest park called Fairyland |
| j. still thriving             | or form                      |

## WHILE READING / LISTENING

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

### Disneyland celebrates 50th birthday

**BNE:** Disneyland celebrated its 50th birthday on Sunday as tens of thousands of fans and celebrities *congregated / congested* at what Disney calls the "happiest place on Earth" for a giant party. Cartoon *pioneer / vanguard* Walt Disney opened the world's first large-scale theme park on July 17, 1955, to *usher / push* in a whole new world of fantasy, escapism and family fun. His inspiration was a more *modern / modest* park called Fairyland, which opened in San Francisco in 1950. A mind-boggling 515 million fun seekers have since visited Disneyland. His idea was to be copied around the world by thousands of other leisure park operators, all wanting to *crush / cash* in on the riches offered by the *lucrative / laxative* new industry.

From its *humble / humming* beginnings, Disney has mushroomed into a global entertainment empire that has become one of the most *ubiquitous / urbane* brands in history. It has *spawned / sprained* everything from blockbuster movies to children's *stationery / stationary* and theme parks across the world in Paris, Japan and very soon Hong Kong. It is virtually impossible to walk around any city of any size and not encounter Mickey Mouse in some shape or form. It is fitting *testosterone / testimony* to the genius of Walt Disney that his idea for family entertainment is still *thriving / striving* five decades on. While the ideal of pure pleasure and enjoyment has not changed, 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:

- congregated
- pioneer
- escapism
- modest
- mind-boggling
- riches
- mushroomed
- spawned
- encounter
- testimony
- thriving
- admission

## DISCUSSION

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

- a. What was your initial reaction to 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 animated movies compare to those from other countries?
- d. Have you ever bought Disney products?
- e. Do you think Walt Disney was a genius?
- f. How true do you think it is to say 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 development team to ensure Disney survives and thrives 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 received to revise your original ideas.



## LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

### Disneyland celebrates 50th birthday

**BNE:** Disneyland celebrated its 50th birthday on Sunday as \_\_\_\_\_ of fans and celebrities congregated at what Disney calls the "happiest place on Earth" for a giant party. Cartoon \_\_\_\_\_ Walt Disney opened the world's first large-scale theme park on July 17, 1955, \_\_\_\_\_ a whole new world of fantasy, escapism and family fun. His inspiration was a more \_\_\_\_\_ park called Fairyland, which opened in San Francisco in 1950. A mind-boggling 515 million \_\_\_\_\_ have since visited Disneyland. His idea was to be copied around the world by thousands of other leisure park operators, all wanting to \_\_\_\_\_ on the riches offered by the \_\_\_\_\_ new industry.

From its \_\_\_\_\_ beginnings, Disney has \_\_\_\_\_ into a global entertainment empire that has become one of the most \_\_\_\_\_ brands in history. It has \_\_\_\_\_ everything from blockbuster movies to children's stationery and theme parks across the world in Paris, Japan and very soon Hong Kong. It is virtually impossible to walk around any city \_\_\_\_\_ and not encounter Mickey Mouse in some shape or form. It is \_\_\_\_\_ testimony to the genius of Walt Disney that his idea for family entertainment is still \_\_\_\_\_ five decades on. While the ideal of pure pleasure and enjoyment has not changed, \_\_\_\_\_ 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 50<sup>th</sup> birthday. Give advice on what you think it should do to thrive for another 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. congregated	gathered
b. usher	guide
c. modest	humble
d. mind-boggling	incomprehensible
e. lucrative	remunerative
f. mushroomed	proliferated
g. spawned	originated
h. fitting	appropriate
i. testimony	proof
j. thriving	flourishing

### PHRASE MATCH:

a. tens of	thousands of fans
b. usher in	a whole new world of fantasy
c. His inspiration was a more	modest park called Fairyland
d. A mind-boggling	515 million fun seekers
e. cash in	on the riches
f. From its humble	beginnings
g. mushroomed into a	global entertainment empire
h. in some shape	or form
i. fitting	testimony
j. still thriving	five decades on

### WHICH WORD?

#### Disneyland celebrates 50th birthday

**BNE:** Disneyland celebrated its 50th birthday on Sunday as tens of thousands of fans and celebrities *congregated* / ~~congested~~ at what Disney calls the "happiest place on Earth" for a giant party. Cartoon *pioneer* / ~~vanguard~~ Walt Disney opened the world's first large-scale theme park on July 17, 1955, to *usher* / ~~push~~ in a whole new world of fantasy, escapism and family fun. His inspiration was a more *modern* / *modest* park called Fairyland, which opened in San Francisco in 1950. A mind-boggling 515 million fun seekers have since visited Disneyland. His idea was to be copied around the world by thousands of other leisure park operators, all wanting to *crush* / *cash* in on the riches offered by the *lucrative* / ~~laxative~~ new industry.

From its *humble* / ~~humming~~ beginnings, Disney has mushroomed into a global entertainment empire that has become one of the most *ubiquitous* / ~~urbane~~ brands in history. It has *spawned* / ~~sprained~~ everything from blockbuster movies to children's *stationery* / ~~stationary~~ and theme parks across the world in Paris, Japan and very soon Hong Kong. It is virtually impossible to walk around any city of any size and not encounter Mickey Mouse in some shape or form. It is fitting ~~testosterone~~ / *testimony* to the genius of Walt Disney that his idea for family entertainment is still *thriving* / ~~striving~~ five decades on. While the ideal of pure pleasure and enjoyment has not changed, admission prices have: the one-dollar ticket in 1955 is now \$56.