

A project by Gabby Arnold

# Disney Theme Parks: Attractions with Storytelling

“If you can dream it, you can do it”  
-Walt Disney

# INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE

## 6/7 English Literacy Curriculum

As a former Disney cast member, I believe that Disney theme parks have many valuable lessons to be taught within their experiences and parks especially with storytelling. Disney parks have a very rich and deep history in storytelling and creating immersive environments. For my learning plan, my goal is for my students to analyze a current Disney theme park attraction and how that ride uses storytelling techniques to immerse the guests. Once they have learnt about Disney and completed their first assignment they will then have the opportunity to create their own theme park attraction and create a written advertisement promoting their new attraction which will be their final assignment for this unit. This unit will take place over a few months during the year and then in May the students will get to go to Playland to experience a theme park first hand. This unit is based on the 6/7 literacy curriculum and will let students explore storytelling in multiple different media types and hopefully give them insight to other possible career choices such as a Disney Imagineer. Disney has made a huge impact on my life and I hope to share my love and knowledge of this company with my students through this creative storytelling unit.

# BIG IDEAS & COMPETENCIES



## BIG IDEAS:

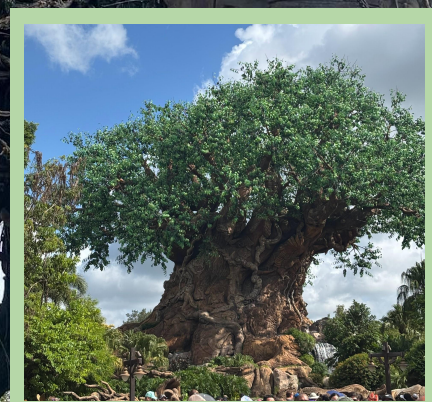
- Language and text can be a source of creativity and joy.
- Exploring stories and other texts helps us understand ourselves and make connections to others and to the world.
- Exploring and sharing multiple perspectives extends our thinking.

## CURRICULAR COMPETENCIES:

- Apply appropriate strategies to comprehend written, oral, and visual texts, guide inquiry, and extend thinking
- Think critically, creatively, and reflectively to explore ideas within, between, and beyond texts
- Respond to text in personal, creative, and critical ways and transform ideas to create original texts
- Use writing and design processes to plan, develop, and create engaging and meaningful literary and informational texts for a variety of purposes and audience.

## CONTENT:

- Paragraphing
- Presentation techniques
- Reading comprehension



# CURRICULUM INTEGRATION

Since this unit will last over a couple of months many other curriculum areas will be touched on like history and science. The Disney Storytelling assignment will have students gather information, analyze, and interpret history articles about their chosen ride. Which focuses on the history curriculum that students will “use social studies inquiry processes and skills to - ask questions, gather, interpret, and analyze ideas to communicate their findings”. This assignment will also have students using multiple sources for their research. Which focuses on the history curriculum that students will “assess the credibility of multiple sources and the adequacy of evidence used to justify conclusions”. The roller coaster assignment will have students generating new and original ideas and problem solving skills when making their coasters. This focuses on the science curriculum that students will “generate and introduce new or redefined ideas when problem solving”. The main focus of this presentation will be on the english language arts curriculum which will have the students use writing and design process to “plan, develop, and create engaging and meaningful literacy and informational texts for a variety of purposes and audiences”. This concept will be the main focus of all the three assignments as well as the others listed on page 3.

**Materials:** For the main 3 assignments students will have access to recycled materials, hot glue, scissors, paper cutters, marbles, paper and coloured paper, etc for their roller coasters and physical assignments. Students will also have laptop access for research and for creating digital assignments. Having a Disney + account to watch attraction documentaries will also be necessary for the teacher.

**Environment:** These assignments will mainly take place within the classroom but an outdoor element will be included when we are at Playland.

# ADAPTATIONS & EXTENSIONS

**Adaptation:** Each of the 3 required assignments for the students can be altered to fit their personal needs. For the Disney storytelling assignment, students with difficulty reading comprehension skills can watch documentaries and videos for their research instead of reading articles. Students can also submit a voice recording to show their understanding if that is a better option for them. For the roller coaster and advertisement assignment, students can draw their roller coaster if building is too difficult for them as well as creating either a video or voice recording for their advertisement. Overall the goal of these assignments is to link their understanding of storytelling with theme parks and creating their own unique attractions through literacy comprehension. All these assignments can be adapted for each student's individual needs and I am confident that each student will be able to submit a project that they are proud of and shows their best understanding and work.

## **Extensions:**

**Disney storytelling:** students can share their findings with their fellow students in small groups or with family members at home furthering their understanding of their attraction and oral strategies as well as including parents/guardians into their students' learning.

**Roller coaster/Advertisement:** students can share their roller coasters with their classmates in small groups to try and convince them to ride their ride and to even let them try out the ride themselves. Students may also have their projects on display and/or present their projects at an end of the year parent night.

**Playland:** students can also document their day by taking photos at playland and including the photos with their reflection sheet.

# LEARNING PLAN

My plan for this unit is for the students to learn about theme parks, storytelling and advertising in a fun and engaging way with a pretty fun ending field trip to commemorate the unit.

**3 Assignments Include:** Disney Storytelling, Roller Coaster Creation and Advertisement, and Playland Reflection.

## **Disney Storytelling:**

- Examining the storytelling of a disney ride and the history written in a paragraph format and presented as an infographic
- Students will pick a Disney attraction of their choice and will then do a research project on the ride and the different types of storytelling the ride uses to immerse the guest. Research can be done with articles, youtube videos, and/or documentaries. Their findings and explanation will then be presented in a format of their choosing. Ex: slideshow, poster, infographic, etc. The goal is to find an attraction of interest and explain the storytelling and history behind their attraction.

## **Roller Coaster/Attraction Creation:**

- In pairs or on their own, students will create their own roller coaster/attraction after doing research on pre-existing Disney rides. The attraction will be their own original idea and will be created out of recycled materials. The goal is to create their own attraction using the techniques and methods they found in their first project.
- Students will have creative freedom when building their own roller coaster out of recycled materials.

## **Written advertisement:**

- After students have created their roller coasters/attractions they will then create a written advertisement explaining and promoting their new ride. The advertisement can be drawn physically or done digitally as an infographic. Their goal is to get guests on their new ride. The written advertisement will explain to guests why they should ride these new and creative rides the students have built.

## **Playland:**

- At the end of the year there will be a field trip to Playland in Vancouver so students can experience a theme park first hand and make connections between their three projects and the attractions at playland.
- The students will then fill out a reflection sheet after visiting Playland but the goal of going to Playland is to be an experience and reward for the students not another assignment so the reflection sheet will be a small manageable task students will partake to put a closure on the unit.

# ASSESSMENT

Students will be assessed on their learnings with the emerging-extending proficiency rubric scale which will be specific to each assignment the students will be completing. Students will also be assessed on their participation throughout the unit and at Playland. Participation and the assignments will be the main way we will be assessing the students on their learnings throughout this unit. The table below is an example of what the Disney Storytelling rubric may look like for the first assignment.

Storytelling	Emerging	Developing	Proficient	Extending
The student used appropriate strategies to comprehend texts to guide inquiry.				
The student used critical, and creative thinking skills to explore ideas within and beyond the texts.				
The student showed their understanding in a personal, creative and critical way.				
The student used writing and design processes to plan, develop and create meaningful literature.				

# IMAGES, LINKS & RESOURCES

Useful links that explore Disney theme park storytelling within the classroom:

- <https://ic4ml.org/journal-article/discovering-theme-parks-new-media-literacy-in-three-dimensions/>
- <https://ic4ml.org/journal-article/storytelling-theme-parks-and-media-literacy-in-dark-ride-disneyland/>

Useful documentaries on Disney+:

- Behind the Attraction
- Disneyland 70 POV Videos
- Disney insider, etc

Useful Youtube Channels/Videos:

- <https://www.youtube.com/@waltdisneyimagineering>
- We Call it Imagineering Series

**\*\* All Photos were taken by Gabby Arnold in Disney World on her CEP**

