

Rationale: Why take Business students to Disneyland® Paris?

Disneyland® Paris provides one of the most effective real-world learning environments for Business students because it allows them to observe a **fully operating, multi-billion-pound business ecosystem** where strategic decisions are visible in every aspect of the customer experience.

Unlike textbook or case study examples, Disneyland Paris demonstrates how core business functions (**marketing, operations, finance, and human resources**) are interconnected and applied simultaneously at scale. Students can see how pricing strategies, queue design, staffing decisions, branding, and customer experience are not theoretical ideas, but carefully engineered business choices designed to influence behaviour and maximise revenue.

A particularly valuable aspect of the visit is the opportunity to study **intellectual property as a business model in action**. Students can observe how Disney leverages franchises such as Marvel, Star Wars, Frozen and Pixar across multiple revenue streams including attractions, merchandise, food and beverage, and accommodation. This provides a concrete example of **brand extension, diversification, and competitive advantage**, helping students understand how modern entertainment businesses generate long-term value.

The park also provides clear evidence of **operations management in a high-volume service environment**. Queue systems, crowd flow design, staffing presence, signage, and customer experience engineering can all be directly observed and analysed in relation to efficiency and customer satisfaction. Similarly, pricing structures and upselling strategies allow students to investigate how businesses increase average spend per customer beyond the initial ticket purchase.

Importantly, Disneyland Paris also offers a powerful historical case study in business adaptation. The early challenges faced by Euro Disney, including lower-than-expected attendance and cultural misjudgements, demonstrate how global businesses must adjust strategy in response to market feedback. The subsequent rebranding to Disneyland Paris and continued investment in new areas shows how businesses evolve to protect and grow market position over time.

Enhancing the Educational Experience

The accompanying pre-trip and on-site resources are designed to ensure the visit is not a passive experience, but a structured **business investigation**.

The pre-trip **Disney Dossier** prepares students with essential contextual knowledge about the history of Disneyland Paris, including its original launch as Euro Disney, early strategic challenges, rebranding, and expansion through major acquisitions such as Marvel and Star

Wars. This ensures students arrive with an understanding of *why* the park operates as it does, rather than simply observing it as visitors.

Crucially, the booklet develops **predictive thinking**. By asking students to forecast how Disney manages pricing, queues, customer experience, and marketing, they enter the park with specific hypotheses to test. This shifts their mindset from passive consumption to active investigation.

Two Complementary In-Park Tasks

To maximise learning during the visit, students take part in two structured business tasks. These are designed to be flexible, and staff may choose to run either or both depending on their group.

1. Creative Agency Challenge (Day 1 – Marketing Perspective)

Students take on the role of a creative media marketing agency hired by Disney to promote Disneyland Paris to a specific target audience. Using observations, photos and short-form content captured throughout the day, they analyse how Disney creates memorable experiences, builds emotional connections and markets its brand. The challenge develops students' understanding of target markets, branding, promotion and customer engagement through a real-world business context.

Students think like marketers:

- Who are we targeting?
- What content will persuade them?
- What emotions are we creating?

This task develops understanding of **promotion, segmentation, and brand positioning**, while also building awareness of how businesses use digital media to influence consumer decisions before and during purchase.

2. Disney Business Consultant Initiative (Day 2 – Consultancy Perspective)

Students then shift perspective and act as business consultants analysing Disneyland Paris as an operating business. They collect photographic evidence of real business decisions in action, focusing on areas such as pricing, queue management, customer experience, branding, and revenue generation.

The emphasis is on identifying **unique examples of business strategy**, encouraging observation, analysis, and justification rather than simple description. Students evaluate why Disney makes specific decisions and how these contribute to profitability, efficiency, and customer satisfaction.

This task develops higher-order thinking skills including **analysis, application, and evaluation**, while reinforcing core GCSE Business content in a real-world context.

Why These Resources Maximise Learning

The supporting pre-trip and in-park resources are designed to ensure the visit is structured, purposeful, and academically rigorous rather than purely experiential.

The **Disney Dossier** prepares students with essential contextual knowledge of Disneyland Paris's development, including its origins as Euro Disney, early business challenges, rebranding, and expansion through major acquisitions such as Marvel and Star Wars. This ensures students arrive with an understanding of the strategic evolution of the business.

The booklet also develops **predictive thinking**, requiring students to anticipate how Disney uses pricing, marketing, operations, and customer experience strategies. This transforms the visit into a test of hypotheses rather than passive observation.

During the trip, the combination of the **Creative Agency Challenge** and the **Business Consultant Initiative** ensures students engage with Disneyland Paris from two complementary perspectives:

- As a **marketer**, understanding how demand is created and shaped
- As a **consultant**, understanding how value is delivered and optimised

Together, these approaches allow students to move beyond simple observation and engage with Disneyland Paris as a living business system.

Ultimately, this structure ensures the trip is not only memorable and engaging, but also directly aligned with Business assessment objectives, particularly application, analysis, and evaluation in a real-world context.