Gilroy Gardens Project Kit

Congratulations! You're going to Gilroy Gardens! Use these project ideas to enrich your educational experience in the park. Read through them before you go to make sure you understand the terms and concepts, and to help you determine if you want to expand upon any of them. You'll find fun facts and printable worksheets at the end of this packet.

a- elementary level activity b- middle school level activity c- high school level activity

Language Arts

Gilroy Gardens is full of fun things to do, but there is a lot that goes on behind the scenes. Informational reports are used by staff to detail the workings and conditions of the attractions, rides, and gardens. Try your hand at writing a professional informational report on one of the attractions.

a. Pick an attraction to do your report on. Draw or write about three details about that attraction (height, color, condition, etc) and whether or not you think it looks safe for guests based on the way it looks. Make recommendations to make the attraction more fun or safer.
b. Choose one attraction to do your report on. Detail five specific details of the attraction, like estimated height, paint condition, queue condition, etc. Conclude your report with a recommendation for improvement.
c. Detail ten specific details of the attraction of your choice. Include guest experience ratings, safety ratings, queue management ratings, etc. Conclude your report with your approval and/or recommendations for improvements. Use appropriate letter format to present your report.

Materials required: Notebook, pen/pencil
Submission: A copy of your writings/drawing, and any pictures/videos

Teaching or learning notes:

Applied Math

Math is everywhere! Every single attraction at Gilroy Gardens was created using math. Take a look around and find examples of the math you know.

a. Identify and draw the shapes that you see and where you see them. See if you can find places where simple math equations were used. Document your findings.
b. Identify the math used to create one particular feature at the gardens. Outline the concepts and principles you see.
c. Identify the math used to create one particular feature at the gardens. Outline the concepts and principles, and use estimation to perform one of the calculations the builders would have used.

Materials required: Notebook, pen/pencil, calculator or smartphone (optional)
Submission: Your calculations, estimations, and conclusions, and any pictures/videos

Teaching or learning notes:

Science

Check out the physics of rides! All ride designs utilize the principles of Conservation of Energy, inertia, friction, potential and kinetic energy, and gravity. What makes the fast rides go fast? Why do rides slow down when they are going uphill? Why do you get flung from side to side around corners? What is inertia and what affect does it have on ride physics? How do rides use potential and kinetic energy to keep them going? How is energy "conserved" during the ride? What parts do friction and gravity play? What are Newton's three laws of motion and can you see them working on the rides?

a. Discuss some of the simpler concepts and try feeling the forces at play on some rides. Compare rides to one another and talk about what goes into building them. Draw one of the rides.
b. Discuss the concepts and identify as many physics concepts as you can on some rides. Compare rides, and then pick one ride at the park to diagram/map and include the forces you can identify to define how that ride works.
c. Discuss the concepts, identify them on some rides, and diagram one of them including its use of physics. Design your own ride using the things you've learned.

Materials required: Notebook, pen/pencil
Submission: A copy of your drawings, diagrams, maps, or designs, and any pictures/videos

Teaching or learning notes:

Social Studies

There are a lot of people at Gilroy Gardens! How does a theme park handle the crowds? What sorts of tools does it employ to manage people and prevent unsafe crowding conditions? What sorts of tools does the park use to limit the number of people who attend the park in a day? What types of attractions does the park utilize to help with crowd control? How do people respond to these tools? Do they notice? How many people do they need to employ to help manage their guests? What affect does the layout of the park have on the movement of people? Can you see these same principles in use in the planning of large cities or other social environments?

a. Notice how many people are in the park. Discuss some of the things Gilroy Gardens does to control crowding and help make each guest's experience pleasurable. Write down or draw the techniques you see and how often you see them being used.
b. Discuss crowd control pre-entrance, during guest stay, and around specific attractions. Analyze the layout of the park and if/why certain features were designed with the purpose of managing crowds.
c. Discuss crowd control and analyze the layout of the park. Discuss the things you've seen in light of larger social environments you've been in. How universal are these techniques? What are your ideas for improving guest experience at Knott's?

Materials required: Notebook, pen/pencil
Submission: A copy of your writings/drawings, and any pictures/videos

Teaching or learning notes:

Fun Facts

- The Gardens began life as the brainchild of Michael Bonfante and started its life as a plant nursery, then as a recreational facility for his company's employees and finally as an amusement park in 2001 under the name of "Bonfante Gardens". It was re-named "Gilroy Gardens" in 2007.

- The gardens consist of 536 acres and over 20 rides!

- Gilroy is in Central California's agricultural heartland is known as the "garlic capitol" of the world and holds a yearly garlic festival which is devoted to all things garlic, including garlic ice cream if you can believe it!

- The "circus" trees were fashioned over many years by an area farmer named Axel Erlandson. Mr. Erlandson painstakingly and patiently "wove" trees together into fascinating shapes. He was featured in Ripley's "Believe it or not" and other publications during the 1930's through the 1950's. After Erlandson's death in 1964, there was no interest on the part of his heirs in preserving his amazingly unique legacy. Many of his specimens died. Eventually, thanks to several intrepid people and Mr. Bonfante, the remainder of the trees were transported and transplanted at what would become the Gardens. Today 25 of Axel Erlandson’s trees are on display at Gilroy, and Erlandson’s first creation, the Four Legged Giant remains alive and well at the park, some 80 years after it was begun.

- There are more than 10,000 trees in Gilroy Gardens.

- 1.1 million square feet of concrete – not asphalt – has been laid throughout the park, enough to cover 23 football fields.

- The most planted tree in Gilroy Gardens is the coastal redwood, the tallest species in the world. It can top 364 feet in height.

- There are five distinct types of waterfalls (tumbling, sheeting, cascading, freefall and split) in Gilroy Gardens. The falls were all placed by Gilroy Gardens founder Michael Bonfante.

- There is only one tree in the park that has not been moved from its original location.

Gilroy Gardens

1. Draw a picture of your favorite ride.

2. Describe your favorite ride and why you love it.

3. What is inertia and when do you experience it?

4. Draw or describe one example engineering you saw.

5. Describe or draw one of the plants you saw.

6. What do gardeners need to do to take care of the gardens?

BONUS:

Choose 2 rides to compare and contrast. Include how many twists and turns it has, the difficulty of its design, an estimate of what it cost to build, and rider experience and enjoyment.