

1. What is Destination ImagiNation®, or “DI”?

25 words or less answer:

Destination ImagiNation® is a creative problem-solving program that teaches kids theatrical and technical skills, independence, leadership, cooperation/teamwork, organization, sportsmanship, brainstorming, and is fun!

30 word answer:

Destination ImagiNation® teaches: creative problem solving & brainstorming, teamwork to solve a complex challenge, how to balance time, budget & creative ideas and how to “sell” their solution to Appraisers.

60-word response:

Destination Imagination® is a creative problem-solving program for students. They work on predetermined challenges. They work in teams and think up all the ideas and do all of the work themselves with a non-participatory adult team manager. The students learn teamwork, innovation, solving problems on a budget, presentation skills, and conflict resolution. Teams perform their solutions at a local/state tournament.

84-word response:

The Destination ImagiNation® School Program promotes divergent thinking and develops creative problem-solving skills in students from kindergarten through college. This program offers students at every level - a unique opportunity to participate in challenging and motivating activities both inside and outside of their regular classroom curriculum. Under the guidance of an adult team manager, students learn to work with others as a team. They develop self-confidence by creating solutions, evaluating ideas and making decisions. They develop their creative skills through problem solving and independent thinking

108-words from the Rules of the Road:

Destination ImagiNation® is a community-based, school-friendly program that builds participants' creativity, problem solving, and teamwork in enjoyable and meaningful ways. The goals of Destination ImagiNation® are to:

- Foster creative and critical thinking among all participants
- Learn and apply Creative Problem Solving method and tools
- Develop teamwork, collaboration, and leadership skills
- Nurture research and inquiry skills, involving both creative exploration and attention to detail
- Enhance and apply written and verbal communication and presentation skills (both impromptu and sustained)
- Promote the recognition, use, and development of many and varied strengths and talents

- Encourage competence in, enthusiasm for, and commitment to real-life problem solving

140-word answer:

Destination ImagiNation® is about teaching children how to work together on teams, to tap into their creativity, and to find innovative and unique solutions to complex and difficult Challenges. At the same time “DI” helps students learn the art and skill of thinking on their feet, using what they have and improvising the rest, and being creative problem solvers. When it is presented well, empowers students and teaches them that no challenge is too big, or too hard or too complex to be solved. The process that teams go through to solve the Destination ImagiNation® Challenges truly can change their lives. Most of our kids never use the words "I can't" after they have solved a Destination ImagiNation® Challenge.... more often they are heard saying "Let me have a look - I think I can" or "Let me try..."

256-word answer:

Destination ImagiNation® is a creative problem-solving program that benefits children from the age of 5 through college. We are non-profit and volunteer run. We're active all over the U.S. and in many countries around the world.

The heart of our program is the Challenges. Destination ImagiNation® produces 6 Challenges every year (an open-ended problem with a set of rules). There is one Challenge especially for kindergarten-age children (Rising Stars!).

The students start working on one of the Challenges in the early fall/winter and present their solution at a local Tournament in late winter/early spring. Each year we have Challenges that focus on technical skills, such as creating an obstacle course for eggs or a roller coaster for tennis balls, or theatrical/improvisation skills, such as creating an elaborate skit about visiting another country. There is more than one solution to a Challenge.

The program is kid-driven and team powered. Teams of up to seven students work with an adult Team Manager to solve the Challenge they have chosen. The students, not the adults, plan, research and execute their solution to the Challenge - they write scripts, compose music, build structures, engineer technical devices, fashion costumes, paint backdrops, make props and choreograph their performance. Then they sell their solution to a panel of Appraisers at the Tournament.

In the process, students learn teamwork, negotiation and compromise. The team members struggle with personalities, deadlines, rules, outside pressures, money constraints and peer pressure. This teaches strategic life skills. Colleges and employers look for the students that have developed these skills.

An Official 339 word explanation: Destination Imagination® at a Glance:

Destination ImagiNation® is the world's largest creativity and problem solving program for kids, with more than 200,000 students in 47 US states, 15 countries and Canadian provinces participating annually.

Destination ImagiNation® helps kids develop a unique and critical skill set by emphasizing:

Creativity – Brainstorming, Creative & critical thinking skills, collaboration and presentation skills.

Problem Solving – Project management, knowledge application, and confidence.

Teamwork – time management, conflict resolution, and research skills.

Although this is the fifth program year under the brand name Destination ImagiNation®, officials and volunteers who organize the annual program have **more than 20 years' experience** creating quality problem solving programs for kids.

Destination ImagiNation® is not just an extracurricular activity, it is an extension of a Destination ImagiNation® brand of curriculum which draws on Creative Problem Solving strategies and the multiple intelligences of students to use what they have learned in the classroom in new and creative ways. In many places, it is a curriculum staple and also very popular in home school situations.

The Destination ImagiNation® program helps kids build important, lifelong skills, like problem solving, teamwork and divergent thinking. Our teams solve two types of Challenges within the program year. The *Team Challenge* involves structural, technical or theatrically oriented Challenges and takes several months to solve. Throughout that time the teams also practice improvisational *Instant Challenges*, which stimulate the team's ability to think quickly and creatively with only minutes to prepare solutions. When tournament time rolls around, each team's score reflects its *Team Challenge* performance plus its response to an *Instant Challenge*.

Creativity isn't just a school-year activity. Many state, local and international Affiliates offer creativity activities for kids year-round, including summer camps that incorporate all of the fun and thoughtful activities that make learning interesting.

Corporate America believes in Destination ImagiNation®! Our program has had and continues to have sponsors such as: National Dairy Council®, 3M, Velcro® USA Inc., Philips® Consumer Electronics, Inc., Best Buy® and Sam Goody®, and the American Institute for Foreign Study® (AIFS).

Sponsorship opportunities exist at the international and local levels.

2. What Does Creative Problem Solving (CPS) Really Mean?

Creative problem solving (CPS) involves combining brainstorming, creative thinking, critical thinking, and implementation of the ideas generated. If someone can't think of an example of creative problem solving, suggest that the Apollo 13 astronauts are alive because of creative problem solving. At one point, they needed a round filter to fit in the slot for a square one. The engineers on earth had to creatively solve the challenge using only the items that the astronauts had available to them. This was truly the case of CPS saving lives!

What are the parts of Destination ImagiNation®?

The Destination ImagiNation® program asks teams to creatively solve two different kinds of Challenges, each with its own purpose and educational focus. The two Challenges, or components, are called the *Team Challenge* (*Central Challenge* and *Side Trips*) and the *Instant Challenge*. Teams present their solutions to both Challenges at a Tournament where the solutions are evaluated by friendly people we call "Appraisers."

For the more exacting answer, here is some more specific info from the Program Guide:

Team Central Challenge

- Purpose: Encourages development of Creative Problem Solving techniques, teamwork, and creative process over a long period of time (usually several months).
- Educational Focus of *Central Challenge*: The project undertaken by the team is curriculum-based and focused on one or more of the following areas: Theatrical/Literary/Fine Arts Elements, Technical/Mechanical Design, Structural Design, Improvisational Techniques.
- Each of the six *Central Challenges* involves a research component and an Improvisational component.
- One or more of the six Challenges involves an international and/or intercultural theme.

Side Trips

- Purpose: Encourages participants to discover and showcase their collective interests, strengths, and abilities as a team and as individuals, and allows them to develop that showcase over a long period of time.
- Educational Focus of *Side Trips*: Based on the educational theory of multiple intelligences, which in part emphasizes allowing participants to find their own best ways to present what they have learned.
- Allows teams total freedom to develop elements of their own choosing and to highlight areas of strength that are not brought forth in the *Central Challenge* requirements.
- Allows/Encourages teams to recognize and make the most of each individual's abilities/interests.

Instant Challenge

The Destination ImagiNation® *Instant Challenge* is a Challenge teams are asked to solve in a very short period of time at their Tournament, without knowing ahead of time what the Challenge will be.

- Purpose: To put team's creative problem solving abilities, creativity, and teamwork to the test in a short, time-driven Challenge.
- Educational Focus of *Instant Challenge*: The team's use of creative problem solving strategies, assessment and use of available materials, and teamwork under tight time constraints.
- Encourages teams to develop creative problem solving and time management strategies, performance and improvisational techniques.
- Develops the ability to quickly assess the properties of provided materials, and learn how to creatively manipulate materials for a unique solution.

What are the goals of Destination ImagiNation?

UNOFFICIAL GOAL: The goal of Destination ImagiNation® is to help children learn that through a combination of *creativity, teamwork & tenacity*, that *they can* develop creative solutions to complex

problems *completely* on their own.

3. How do I Start the Program in My School?

If you are looking for school support, approach the school administration or get a teacher excited about the program. That could help free up official school sponsorship status and/or funds. However, know that any community organization (or an individual) can start a Destination ImagiNation® team. Often schools provide educational, facilities and financial support to teams – giving teachers time to help Destination ImagiNation® teams or manage a team themselves, space for teams to meet at the school, or financial support by purchasing memberships, giving teams money or helping teams that advance to state/global finals.

4. Where Can I Go to Get Information About the Program?

You can go to the official Destination Imagination® web site at www.destinationimagination.org, or you can visit your Affiliate or Regional web site, which are posted on the Destination Imagination® web site. You can also call your Regional or Affiliate Director.

5. How Do We Join and Get Started?

Purchase a Destination ImagiNation® Passport -- Purchase the Passport by logging onto DION at www.destinationimagination.org. Follow the directions to purchase a membership/passport.

Choose from either a:

- \$100 for an Individual Team Passport (ideal for small schools, community groups, homeschool groups, etc.), or
- \$175 5-Pak that allows up to 5 teams (ideal for schools, organizations, after-school programs, etc.).

2. Get a team of kids together (up to 7 students) and find an adult Team Manager (older than 18 years old).

3. Download the Challenges and Rules of the Road from the Destination Imagination® web site at www.destinationimagination.org.

4. Start getting together at meetings and doing some team building exercises, *Instant Challenges* and working on the *Central Challenge*.

5. Check your local or Affiliate Destination ImagiNation® site for information and dates for Team Manager trainings, training for students (DI Skills Day, IC/Improv Days, Construction 101, etc.),

Tournaments and any local meetings.

6. How do I get a Passport Number?

Purchase a membership passport -- Purchase the membership passport by logging onto DION at www.destinationimagination.org. Follow the directions to purchase a membership/passport.

Choose from either a:

-\$100 for a single team membership (ideal for small schools, community groups, homeschool groups, etc.)

-or \$175 5-pack allows up to 5 teams (ideal for schools, organizations, after-school programs, etc.).

7. Who Pays for This?

Your school, PTA, gifted program, YMCA, 4H club, house of worship, homeschool group, after-school program, community organization, your family – it all depends on who's name the passport is in.

8. How Much Does It Cost? How Do I Fund It? Is it Expensive for the Amount of Kids Involved?

Destination ImagiNation® is a lesson in VALUE [costing less than \\$5 per student per year!](#)

The initial purchase of a membership is \$100 (for a single team) to \$175 (for up to 5 teams). That cost is usually paid by a sponsoring organization (school, church, YMCA, homeschool group, etc.) or by the team itself (through fundraising or a division of the cost among team members).

Each Challenge has a maximum cost - but that only counts the items that make it onto the performance stage. Teams have been known to change themes (after props and costumes are made); change costumes, props and backdrops several times before they compete; or go through LOTS of practice materials as they learn how to use a saw, build a structure from balsa wood or sew a costume using expensive materials. On the other hand, many teams are excellent at finding items in their attic or at secondhand stores, reuse materials they have already used once and generally are frugal with their resources. Teams that are using their own money tend to spend too much money – as it is coming out of their own pockets. So, to answer the question, the Challenge can cost \$100 or less - or a whole lot more, depending on the team itself.

Teams find their funding in a variety of ways:

- Schools or sponsoring organizations may give teams money to use; and/or they may donate space for the team to use.

- Teams may ask each team member to pay a certain amount of money up front to fund projects; team members may be asked for more money if they change their solution several times and more resources are necessary.
- Teams may fund-raise to get the money they need. Some schools may cooperate with fundraising.
- Items may be purchased at regular stores, at discount stores, at secondhand stores, Goodwill, or they may be found in dumpsters, the attic, closets or the basement. All used items (other than "free" items such as newspaper and cardboard) must be assessed a fair-market garage sale price, no matter the source, even if they have been donated.
- For snacks, many teams ask either parents to alternate bringing snacks; or everyone brings snacks at the beginning and then they are stored and used as necessary; or a snack fund may be started and one or more adults buy snacks each meeting.

9. How is This Different Than Other Programs Available to Our Kids?

While any child would be lucky to participate in most programs of this type, Destination ImagiNation® is a non-profit, volunteer-run, child-centric organization. Every aspect of the program, by design, is extremely responsive to the membership, and most important, to the students in our programs. We maintain communities to share our best practices, as well as globally collaborating on areas of improvement. The result is a very child-friendly program that rewards teams, within the rules, for their creativity, teamwork and innovation.

Our success is reflected in the Destination ImagiNation Alumni group, or DIA. The growing numbers of our alumni in DIA maintain year-round contact at collegiate and professional levels for years to come, and are instrumental volunteers in the program at all levels.