



## Thematic Worksheet for Informal Education sites like Parks, Zoos, Nature Centers, etc.

Creating a Mission can feel like a daunting task. These steps follow the basic thematic building blocks and are intended to help you build the best Mission possible. When developing new Missions with Challenges, imagine that you are developing a guided hike. The hike should be 1-1½ miles long and should take less than an hour.

Think about your purpose and ask: what do I want my audience to see and learn? What actions would I like to see as a result? Sound familiar? You are on the right track!

### 1. BASE BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A. Remember that any interpretive product should have **RELEVANCE** or **VitaminR** \* loaded. Think about your target audience.

Our target audience for this game is: *(fill in the box below!)*

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

B. We recommend that the Challenges **RELATE** to the site, so it's important to the goal of the site/agency.

The goal of MY SITE is to _____
_____
_____



C. What is the **significance of YOUR site** – what makes it special and unique from other sites?

The significance of our site is \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

D. What is the **purpose of YOUR site** – why was the site created?

The purpose of what we do at our site is to \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

OK, now we have a good understanding of who you want to be playing the game, as well as the importance, purpose, and goal of your site. Now it's time to start developing a central theme to base your Challenges around.

## **1. STAGES OF THEME DEVELOPMENT FOR YOUR DISCOVERY AGENTS MISSION**

A. Start with a topic.

The game at my site is generally about \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

B. After brainstorming with others, narrow the topic. Now answer:

Specifically, I want to tell the players of the game that \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_





C. Once you have narrowed the topic down, now think about what you want the audience to carry away with them and answer:

After playing Agents of Discovery game at my site, I want the players to understand that

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D. OK, you are now on your way to creating a solid theme that you can base your Challenge content around. Think about universal intangibles (emotions, feelings, concepts) that EVERYONE can relate to. List the universal intangibles.

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E. Now craft a theme statement that combines all of the above.

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The work above should help guide YOUR Challenge content and ensure they relate to your site, significance, and purpose/mission of your site/agency. Please note that you could repeat this exercise to develop other themes. We recommend keeping it to no more than three themes.

### 3. CHALLENGE CONTENT

We have developed a **Top 10 Tips for Writing Great Challenges** guide (*see page 13*). Included in these guidelines are tools to ensure your content is at the appropriate reading level and avoids the passive tense.



### A. Maslow

Remember that Maslow's hierarchy of needs taught us that, to realize self-actualization and be fully engaged, we must first meet basic and intermediate needs. Adding the location of your bathrooms, trail information, and what to expect are all basic needs your users will have, and you can weave these needs into Challenges and opening statements. Write your welcome message below: *(needs to be less than 40 words)*.

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### B. Rules and Regulations

As per our best practices, adding a couple of Challenges about rules and safety is a great way to orientate your users to your rules. Writing down some of the common safety messages or rules can help craft a message or two at the beginning of the trail..

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### C. Where not to go

Most sites have areas that you may want youth / large groups to avoid, such as cliffs, sensitive areas, or dangerous spots... List areas to avoid.

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### D. Interpretive opportunities.

As you know, your site abounds with opportunities to learn, so ensure you pick Challenge locations that allow the resource to touch players' hearts and minds through observations,





sound, and touch. Waysides can be used with Challenges to find additional information. Platforms, views, boardwalks, viewing stations, historic structures, and landscape view sheds are all great locations for Challenges. Remember, you can use indoor structures and exhibits through QR codes too. Best practices start the game at areas of natural locations with bathrooms and parking. List the opportunities that include a starting point.

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#### E. Measurable Objectives

Measurable objectives are excellent ways to gauge the success of your Mission. You can be creative and develop real-world objectives such as reducing trash on a trail, cleaning up vandalism, or basic rule adherence. Use Challenges so players can identify what your organization is all about. The analytics report can help you determine if users understand Challenges by seeing their responses. Write down some measurable objectives you would like to see because of playing the game. Try for at least 3-5 objectives.

1. _____	4. _____
2. _____	5. _____
3. _____	

#### F. Completing the Mission

Agents of Discovery has a cool feature that allows you to send a message of congratulations when a player completes a Mission. Include the digital badge we provide for players to claim tangible rewards such as stickers, discounts, or other promotional materials you may offer. List the tangible rewards your site could offer and or the main call to action such as joining the Friends group or social media efforts.

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#### 4. PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Hopefully, your ideas and brainstorming with staff are bearing fruitful creativity. This is YOUR content. Now it's time to start building a program outline that you can then base your Challenge types and content around. Use the form below.

##### THEME(s) for the Game

_____
_____

##### MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES

1. _____	4. _____
2. _____	5. _____
3. _____	

##### CHALLENGE LOCATIONS & CHALLENGE TOPICS

1.	_____
2.	_____
3.	_____
4.	_____
5.	_____
6.	_____
7.	_____
8.	_____
9.	_____





### CHALLENGE LOCATIONS & CHALLENGE TOPICS, cont.

10.	
11.	
12.	
13.	
14.	
15.	
16.	
17.	
18.	
19.	
20.	

### CALLS TO ACTION

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

### CONCLUDING REWARD

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_