

# The Story of Mexican Murals

by Caitlyn Meagher



This is part of a mural painted by Diego Rivera. The title of the mural is "History of Mexico," and the sign in the painting reads, "Land and Liberty." This was an important political message during the Mexican Revolution.

Public art has been important throughout history. In Mexico, many artists used murals to communicate social and political messages. Murals are paintings that are painted directly on a large wall. Back when most people in the country could not read, artists would paint murals to **express** certain politics or traditions. These murals were available for all to see. Mural painting became a way for artists to share their beliefs and try to unite a divided country.

In 1910, the Mexican Revolution began. This Revolution was a civil war that started with an election and lasted for about a decade. Many people were unhappy with the dictator Porfirio Díaz, who had declared himself the winner of that election. So a war broke out as people struggled for power. For many years, Mexico experienced division and violence. No one could agree on who should lead the country. Many people fled Mexico in hopes of a better life. People who stayed in the country wanted **reforms**. **Reforms** are changes that improve people's lives. Even though the Revolution ended in 1920, Mexico was still very divided. Artists tried to bring people together by making murals.

The artists painted farmers, laborers, and **revolutionaries**. They painted these middle- and lower-class people as heroes. They also painted images of the Mexican Revolution. Some of these images showed the violence and fear during this decade.



This is a mural painted by David Alfaro Siqueiros in Mexico City.

Three artists became known for their **revolutionary** murals. They were nicknamed "Los Tres Grandes," or Three Great Ones. They were Diego Rivera, José Clemente Orozco, and David Alfaro Siqueiros. Siqueiros even fought in the Revolution.

Los Tres Grandes and the rest of the mural artists proudly **displayed** Mexican culture and heritage. They also taught people the history of Mexico. They did not paint for the wealthy, but for every Mexican citizen. The murals were for the people and by the people, just like a lot of street and graffiti art today.

# Vocabulary

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**definition:** to cause to be seen; show.

*Artists display their paintings along the sidewalks of New York City.*

**Spanish:** exponer, mostrar, manifestar

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verb

**definition:** to make known (ideas, thoughts, or feelings).

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**definition:** the changing of wrong or bad conditions to make them better.

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**2. Word Matcher**

Every word has other words that have similar meanings or even the exact same meaning (these are called synonyms!). Draw a line from each similar word or synonym to the vocabulary word that it matches!

show

exhibit

present

state

communicate

**display**

**express**

**revolutionary**

convey

rebel

revolutionist

insurgent

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1. What are murals?

- A. paintings of important people, like politicians
- B. sculptures done in public places
- C. paintings painted directly on a large wall
- D. paintings painted on canvases

2. Mexican artists began painting murals to help heal divisions in Mexican society. What were some causes of those divisions?

- A. the Mexican Revolution and disagreement over who should lead the country
- B. World War II and disagreement over whether Mexico should get involved in the war
- C. unemployment in the country and disagreement over how to fix it
- D. new technology and disagreement over how to best use it

3. Read the following sentences from the text.

"The artists painted farmers, laborers, and revolutionaries. They painted these middle- and lower-class people as heroes. They also painted images of the Mexican Revolution. Some of these images showed the violence and fear during this decade."

What can you conclude about these murals based on this information?

- A. The murals were mostly self-portraits of the artists who made them.
- B. Most of the murals were very insulting towards the farmers in Mexico.
- C. Revolutionaries were too dangerous to depict in these murals.
- D. The murals featured people and events that were important in Mexico.

4. The author says that murals by artists like Los Tres Grandes were "for the people and by the people." What is one reason that the author might describe the murals this way?
- A. because they were painted by huge groups of citizens
  - B. because they depicted lower- and middle-class people as heroes
  - C. because the money the artists made was invested in public goods
  - D. because they were painted only on the walls of big apartment buildings
5. What is the main idea of this text?
- A. Mexican artists like Los Tres Grandes painted murals to unite their country after the division of the Mexican Revolution.
  - B. Diego Rivera was a more important artist than David Alfaro Siqueiros, but they were both ultimately part of Los Tres Grandes.
  - C. Porfirio Díaz was a dictator in Mexico who declared himself the winner of an election in Mexico, upsetting many people.
  - D. Public art is an important tool, but sometimes it can be used to harm a country, like in Mexico after the Mexican Revolution.

# The Problem with Self-Portraits

by Gabrielle Reyes



colored pencils

Luisella Planeta Leoni from Pixabay

"Today's project is called '**Express Yourself**,'" Ms. Eng announced to her fifth-grade class. "You are all going to create a self-portrait that **represents** the artist-that's you! I want you to tell us something about yourself through the image you create, and then add a phrase or sentence to go with it. This is a great opportunity for everyone in class to learn more about each of you, so let's get started!"

Marites groaned, slumped in her seat, and stared at her blank sheet of paper. *Self-portraits are the worst*, she thought. *First of all, I never like drawing myself because the pictures always came out badly. How do you even draw a nose, anyway? Nostrils look ridiculous. On top of that, we're supposed to tell something about ourselves? The only thing worse than drawing yourself is talking about yourself!*

Marites picked up her pencil, looked up, and glanced around the classroom. To her surprise, everyone else seemed to be working already. To her right, Nora had gathered her supplies, placing a watercolor palette in front of her and mixing a pale purple. Nora's favorite color was purple: her backpack was purple and her sneakers were purple. She even had a purple streak in her hair. Across from Marites, Theo had drawn a large oval with thick Sharpie marker and was starting to add his dark brown curly hair. He didn't even **sketch** it out in pencil first.

Marites noticed.

*How does anyone know how to begin?* Marites wondered. She hadn't even picked out which art supplies she was going to use! *What colors "represent" me-black for my long black hair or green for my 'Save the Earth' backpack? My stuff comes in all different colors-my jacket is blue, my shoes are red, my sweatshirts are pink and orange. I don't even have a favorite color!*

"Class, I can't wait to see what you are going to share with us about yourselves," Ms. Eng chirped. "Show some of your favorite things. What's exciting to you these days? What are you doing when you feel happiest or most like yourself?"

Ms. Eng moved over to Ana's desk. "Wow, Ana," she said, "I see you're drawing yourself in some kind of spotlight. Is that **background** a stage? I wonder if you like acting or singing." Then the teacher glanced at the creation of one of the boys. "Lionel, it looks like you've pictured yourself wearing huge headphones, which makes me wonder what kind of music you like to listen to."

Marites felt a knot in her stomach as Ms. Eng stopped and looked over her shoulder. It was her blank piece of paper that seemed in a spotlight now.

"Hey there, Marites, it looks like you're still figuring out your piece."

"I...just...I can't do it," Marites muttered and slammed her pencil down on the table. "I don't know what to draw, I don't have any good ideas, it's...it's... just too hard!"

Marites felt her shoulders rise and stiffen and figured that she was about to get reprimanded. A second passed, then another. She glanced up nervously at Ms. Eng. But Ms. Eng didn't seem mad at all-in fact, she was nodding her head.

"Self-portraits are hard for a lot of people," her teacher said. "They're hard for me too! Tell me, Marites, what is one part of this project that seems extra hard to you?"

Marites's eyes swept around the classroom. "I just...don't know what to choose-or how to start. I can't think of one thing that **represents** me... I don't even have a favorite *food!*" she exclaimed. "When I'm sick, my favorite food is my Lolo's *arroz caldo*, you know, like a thick rice and chicken soup. At picnics, my favorite food is a mango sliced and dotted with salt. And on my birthday, my favorite food is apple pie-never, *ever* cake. That's why it is *impossible* for

me to pick one favorite," Marites said in a shaky voice. "And I definitely *can't* pick one thing that **represents** me," she added, letting out a big breath of air.

"That makes all the sense in the world to me, Marites," said Ms. Eng, "and there's nothing wrong with not having one favorite thing. In fact, I bet most people are like that, if you really ask them. And you know what? The fact that you have different 'favorites' is really intriguing," Ms. Eng went on. "I would love to know more about them. What if you use this project to share many parts of yourself-the things you're interested in, the feelings you have, even the foods you like to eat *sometimes*?"

Marites's eyebrows scrunched together, as they always did when she was thinking extra hard. After a few moments, she began to nod her head. "I think I can do that, Ms. Eng. I have an idea."

She gathered up a batch of different colored pencils, finally picking a bright orange that looked like a ripe juicy mango. Next, she decided upon a brown pencil to make a bowl of warm *arroz caldo*, and then grabbed a black pencil to draw her straight long black hair. Finally, she filled her sheet of paper with different sized and different colored oval shapes to be her faces.

Marites wouldn't draw just one image of herself-she would draw several. And each one would **represent** what she liked... *sometimes*.

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<b>represent</b>				
<b>sketch</b>				

**2. Word Changer**

Words have different forms when we use them in different ways. Write the correct vocabulary word, in its correct form, in each blank.

The president's speech \_\_\_\_\_ the idea that good schools are needed to make the country stronger.

A skull and crossbones \_\_\_\_\_ danger.

This author always \_\_\_\_\_ the plot before she begins to write a book.

**3. After reading and exploring the words through some activities...**

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What art project did Ms. Eng assign to her students in this story?

- A. to make a large sculpture
- B. to sing a new song
- C. to paint a colorful painting
- D. to make a self-portrait

2. Where is this story set?

- A. in a classroom
- B. in a cafeteria
- C. on the school playground
- D. in a car

3. Read the following sentences from the text.

*"How does anyone know how to begin? Marites wondered. She hadn't even picked out which art supplies she was going to use! What colors "represent" me-black for my long black hair or green for my 'Save the Earth' backpack? My stuff comes in all different colors-my jacket is blue, my shoes are red, my sweatshirts are pink and orange. I don't even have a favorite color!"*

What can you conclude about how Marites felt, based on this information?

- A. Marites felt frustrated and confused about how to represent herself in her self-portrait.
- B. Marites felt surprised and excited when she saw that her classmates were all working together to make art.
- C. Marites knew exactly how she wanted to represent herself.
- D. Marites felt happy and confident with exactly how to represent herself.

4. How did Ms. Eng react when Marites told her that she doesn't know how to start her self-portrait?

- A. She got mad at Marites for wasting time and not starting her piece.
- B. She disagreed with Marites and said that self-portraits are very easy
- C. She agreed with Marites that self-portraits are very tricky and hard to start.
- D. She told Marites to just do what all the other students are doing.

5. What is one major theme of this story?

- A. Being happy has to start with a deep understanding of the one main thing that you like more than anything else.
- B. Taking photos is a good way to understand yourself and your view of the world.
- C. It's interesting to like many different things, and it's ok to not be able to represent yourself simply.
- D. It's important to get feedback on art so that you can keep making it better, even if you don't like that feedback.

6. Read the following sentences from the text.

"That makes all the sense in the world to me, Marites,' said Ms. Eng, 'and there's nothing wrong with not having one favorite thing. In fact, I bet most people are like that, if you really ask them. And you know what? The fact that you have different 'favorites' is really **intriguing**,' Ms. Eng went on. 'I would love to know more about them.' "

In this part of the text, what does the word intriguing most closely mean?

- A. lucky
- B. interesting
- C. sad
- D. annoying

7. Choose the word that best completes this sentence.

Marites doesn't know how to start her self-portrait \_\_\_\_\_ she likes so many different things.

- A. however
- B. such as
- C. because
- D. in conclusion

8. What advice did Ms. Eng give Marites about her self-portrait?

9. How did Marites solve the problem of not being able to choose one color or thing to represent herself?

10. What did Marites learn about herself through this art project?

# The Paintings of Kehinde Wiley

by Caitlyn Meagher



Kehinde Wiley in 2015  
*U.S. State Department*

Many **modern** painters take inspiration from painters who came before them. They combine traditional styles of painting with pop culture and **modern subjects** to create a new style of art.

Kehinde Wiley is a visual artist who takes inspiration from **classical** art. He mainly paints **portraits** of Black men and people of color. For his early work, Wiley found his **subjects** on the streets of New York City. Over time, he expanded his **portraits** to include music icons and famous Black celebrities. One of his most famous paintings is a **portrait** of Barack Obama. Obama is seated in a chair and surrounded by bright green leaves and colorful flowers.

One of Kehinde Wiley's inspirations is **classical** European art. Wiley takes symbols and

images from the Renaissance and other **classical** periods and transforms them. For example, during the Renaissance, artists often painted **portraits** of royalty or religious scenes. They also created colorful, complex stained glass windows for churches. Wiley created his own stained glass window. For his piece, he reproduced the background of a 16th century window. But the figure in his stained glass window is a Black man dressed in a **modern**-day vest. The figure looks heroic and strong. Many of Wiley's art pieces use this kind of format. His backgrounds are colorful and detailed. His **subjects** wear **modern** clothing, but Wiley puts them in poses used by royalty in **classical portraits**. His paintings allow the viewer to recognize the power and majesty of these individuals.

When Wiley visited museums as a kid, he was saddened to see very few Black artists and Black people as **subjects** of paintings. "By and large," Wiley says, "most of the work that we see in the great museums throughout the world are populated with people who don't happen to look like me... I wanted to fulfill the goal of feeling a certain personal presence in that work." Wiley wants to see himself and his community in heroic **portraits**.

Kehinde Wiley continues to travel the world. He explores different cultures and finds **subjects** for new artwork. Many of his paintings hang in some of the top art galleries in the world.

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**2. Word Changer**

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A \_\_\_\_\_ of Abraham Lincoln hangs on the wall.

The \_\_\_\_\_ of the portrait was a young woman.

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Where does Kehinde Wiley take inspiration from for his art?

- A. musical theater
- B. cookbooks
- C. classical art
- D. minimalism

2. The text describes the subjects of Wiley's portraits. Who does Wiley mostly paint portraits of?

- A. Wiley mostly paints portraits of Black men and people of color.
- B. Wiley mostly paints portraits of historical figures from the Renaissance.
- C. Wiley mostly paints portraits of women and children.
- D. Wiley mostly paints self-portraits of himself at different ages.

3. Read the following sentences from the passage.

"Wiley created his own stained glass window. For his piece, he reproduced the background of a 16th century window. But the figure in his stained glass window is a Black man dressed in a modern-day vest."

What can you conclude based on this information?

- A. Wiley's artworks are exact copies of classical paintings and artworks.
- B. Wiley's artworks are a combination of classical and modern parts.
- C. Wiley mostly gets inspiration from artworks from the 19th century.
- D. Wiley is only interested in painting, not any other art forms.

4. How did Wiley's experience visiting museums as a kid impact his artworks today?

- A. He refuses to show his paintings and other artwork in museums because he had such negative experiences in museums as a child.
- B. His artwork completely rejects all influences from art that he saw on display in museums, especially European art from the classical period.
- C. His artwork is only sculptures because he found paintings to be too boring whenever he visited museums as a child.
- D. His artwork features Black subjects because he wanted to see himself and his community represented in artwork.

5. What is the main idea of this text?

- A. The Renaissance is one classical period of European art, and Renaissance artists often painted portraits of royalty or religious scenes.
- B. Kehinde Wiley is a Black visual artist who takes inspiration from classical European art when making his powerful portraits of modern Black men and people of color.
- C. Many of Kehinde Wiley's pieces include a heavily patterned background with a wide variety of colors and intricate details.
- D. One of Kehinde Wiley's best-known portraits is a portrait of Barack Obama, which was made as Obama's official presidential portrait.

# Frida Kahlo, an Artist and Inspiration

The text is provided courtesy of Vanderbilt University: Center for Latin American Studies.



Frida Kahlo was born on July 6, 1907 in Mexico City, the capital of Mexico. Kahlo had polio when she was 6 years old and lived through a bus accident when she was 18 years old, but it left her in pain the rest of her life. She began to paint after the bus accident, and often painted pictures of herself in pain. Despite not being able to walk well and having to wear a back **brace**, Kahlo embraced painting and continued to paint as a way to **express** herself. She quickly became famous for being a female painter at a time when women did not paint professionally in Mexico.

When she was 21, she met and married another famous Mexican painter, Diego Rivera, whom she eventually divorced. The couple traveled around the United States as Rivera was asked to paint large murals in many American cities. Kahlo continued her own artwork, often painting objects differently than they looked in real life, a type of art known as *surrealism*. But over time, Kahlo's health also grew worse. She had to have her right leg amputated and spent many months in the hospital.



Diego Rivera watching Frida Kahlo paint a self-portrait

People around the world started to notice Kahlo's work. She was even invited to show her paintings in Paris, France. In the year before she died, Kahlo's work was displayed in an exhibit in Mexico City. Kahlo was **determined** to attend the opening, even though her doctors made her stay in bed. She was taken to the opening in an ambulance and had the museum set up a bed so that she could attend her art show. Eventually, her poor health took her over, and Kahlo died. She was 47 years old.

Since her death, Frida Kahlo has inspired Mexican and female artists around the world. Her passion for painting and **persistence** to continue painting even though she was sick encourages other artists to never give up. She has become a symbol of Mexico, feminism, personal strength, and believing in yourself. The United States put one of her paintings on a postage stamp in 2001, and she was declared a saint in Texas. Her house in Mexico (called *La Casa Azul*, which means the Blue House in Spanish) was transformed into an art museum where people from around the world travel to see Kahlo's paintings and feel her spirit.

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1. What country was Frida Kahlo born in?

- A. Ecuador
- B. Canada
- C. Mexico
- D. Peru

2. Kahlo was sick and lived through a bus accident when she was young, causing bad health for the rest of her life. What effect did this have on her painting career?

- A. It made her happier and more content.
- B. It made her more fearless in her sculpture work.
- C. It made her embrace painting as a way to express herself.
- D. It made her stop painting.

3. Kahlo was known for painting in one specific style.

What evidence from the text supports this conclusion?

- A. "Kahlo continued her own artwork, often painting objects differently than they looked in real life, a type of art known as *surrealism*."
- B. "Kahlo was determined to attend the opening, even though her doctors made her stay in bed."
- C. "The United States put one of her paintings on a postage stamp in 2001, and she was declared a saint in Texas."
- D. "Her passion for painting and persistence to continue painting even though she was sick encourages other artists to never give up."

4. The author says that Kahlo became a symbol of feminism, or women's rights. What evidence from the text supports the idea of Kahlo being known as a strong, inspiring woman?
- A. "She quickly became famous for being a female painter at a time when women did not paint professionally in Mexico."
  - B. "When she was 21, she met and married another famous Mexican painter, Diego Rivera, whom she eventually divorced."
  - C. "Despite not being able to walk well and having to wear a back brace, Kahlo embraced painting and continued to paint as a way to express herself."
  - D. "Frida Kahlo was born on July 6, 1907 in Mexico City, the capital of Mexico."
5. What is the main idea of this text?
- A. Frida Kahlo, a Mexican painter, persevered through bad health to become an internationally-known female surrealist painter.
  - B. Diego Rivera, Frida Kahlo's husband, was well known for his mural paintings, which were large paintings in public places.
  - C. Frida Kahlo traveled to her art show in Mexico City in an ambulance and had the museum set up a bed for her so she could attend.
  - D. Even though Frida Kahlo loved painting, she was not able to do it throughout her life because of her bad health.

# Imagine That

by Mercedes Jackson

Everyone at Columbine Elementary knew Teya. She was the kid with the red-rimmed glasses and big curly hair, with skin the color of brightly polished copper. There weren't many girls at this school who looked like her.

But the main reason everyone knew Teya was because of her wild imagination.

Last year, this fifth-grader won first place in the district-wide art contest. The theme was "Anything is Possible," and students were invited to send in drawings and paintings illustrating that theme. Teya's drawing showed a group of fish standing around a fishbowl, feeding the humans inside.

That's so Teya! She saw the world differently through those red-rimmed glasses. In fact, her parents gave her that name, short for Teyana, because they believed their child was one-of-a-kind, and they wanted her name to be **unique**, too.

Teya's new BFF was Kimberly, who had just moved to Colorado. Kimberly had hazel eyes and blond braids that she always tied neatly with colorful ribbons. Every day, Teya and Kimberly ate lunch together, worked on art projects together, and played games together. So, when Kimberly invited Teya to a sleepover at her home, Teya was thrilled.

"And when you come over, we can play in my new dollhouse," Kimberly said.

"That sounds great!" replied Teya.

On Saturday, Teya's dad drove her to Kimberly's home on the other side of town.

"Hi, Teya!" Kimberly called out, running from the front porch. "I'm so glad you're here!"

Teya's dad grabbed her overnight bag out of the trunk, gave it to his daughter, and kissed her cheek. "You two have fun," he said. "Don't stay up too late."

Kimberly took Teya's hand and guided her to the backyard. "Come see my new dollhouse!"

"Wow," Teya thought when she saw it, her eyes widening behind those red-rimmed glasses "OMG, your dollhouse is huge," she blurted out. "I'll bet we can sit *inside* it!"

"Yeah! Take a look!" Kimberly gushed. She pointed to the house's fancy little furniture, its tiny neon pink tea set, and its lime-green walls. As she looked around, Teya said, "wow" a lot, which seemed to make Kimberly very happy.

But when Teya opened the shutters and glanced through the windows, she spotted a giant, empty box by the trash can. Suddenly, her imagination was fired up.

"You know what this place is missing?" she asked.

"What?" Kimberly's hazel eyes lit up with **curiosity**.

"Wait here. I have an idea."



art supplies  
*fietzfotos on Pixabay*

Teya got up, ran to the box, and dragged it to the dollhouse. Dumping the contents of her overnight bag onto the grass, she picked up her colored markers, a half stick of glue, and a bottle of blue glitter.

"What are you going to do?" Kimberly **wondered**.

"We are going to do something. We are going to create a car to go with your amazing dollhouse."

Teya began to draw doors on the side of the box in her favorite color, red. Kimberly spread the glue stick all over the front of the box and sprinkled the blue glitter on top. When the wind blew, it made the stray glitter fly all over the yard.

"Cool! Looks like **magic**," Teya commented.

"It is!"

Next, Teya picked up the paper plates with sandwiches and chips that Kimberly's mom had made for them. She carefully put the food onto the backyard table, then glued the paper plate to a stick and jammed the stick into the front of the box.

"There we go! That's our steering wheel," Teya announced. "We're ready to take a drive!"

"But don't we need seatbelts?" Kimberly protested. "Wait!" she added. "Now I have an idea."

Kimberly took a long purple ribbon from one of her braids and handed it to Teya. Placing the ribbon over her shoulder, Teya buckled in. Kimberly did the same.

Now, with her legs positioned crisscross applesauce, Teya started the car with the push of a button she had drawn moments before.

Teya called, "Kim, hold on!" Turning the steering wheel, Teya made *vrooom* noises. Then she stood up and, with Kimberly, began pushing their deluxe box car across the yard.

And with the wind in their hair, the friends took off on an imaginary journey across the Rocky Mountains.

# Vocabulary

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verb

**definition:** to make known (ideas, thoughts, or feelings).

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*Her big smile expressed her happiness and gratitude.*

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*The corrupt city government is in need of reform.*

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**definition:** creating or leading to great change.

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<b>curiosity</b>				
<b>magic</b>				
<b>unique</b>				
<b>wonder</b>				

**2. Word Builder**

Words are made of smaller parts that are called syllables. Some words have one syllable, but many have two or more. Draw lines to show how the syllables build each vocabulary word.

ri	ty	mag	nique
			i
		os	der
	won	u	cu
			ic

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

**3. After reading and exploring the words through some activities...**

Do you know these words better? Check the box that shows how well you know each word. It's ok if you don't know them yet (this is not graded)!

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What is the main reason everyone knew Teya?

- A. her crazy sense of style
- B. her wild imagination
- C. her fun sense of humor
- D. her skills at arguing

2. What is the relationship between Teya and Kimberly like?

- A. They haven't spent much time together but they like each other.
- B. The main activities that they like to do together are reading and writing.
- C. They don't get along well at school and don't spend any time together.
- D. They do lots of fun activities together and spend lots of time together.

3. Teya's imagination is inspired by everyday objects.

What evidence from the text supports this idea?

- A. "But when Teya opened the shutters and glanced through the windows, she spotted a giant, empty box by the trash can. Suddenly, her imagination was fired up."
- B. "'And when you come over, we can play in my new dollhouse,' Kimberly said. 'That sounds great!' replied Teya."
- C. "Teya's new BFF was Kimberly, who had just moved to Colorado. Kimberly had hazel eyes and blond braids that she always tied neatly with colorful ribbons."
- D. "Teya began to draw doors on the side of the box in her favorite color, red. Kimberly spread the glue stick all over the front of the box and sprinkled the blue glitter on top."

4. What is one way that Teya expresses her imagination and creativity in this story?

- A. through music
- B. through dance
- C. through visual art
- D. through poetry

5. What is one theme of this text?

- A. Imagination is a powerful tool that can lead to creative, fun activities and friendships.
- B. Some forms of art, like dance and singing, are more powerful than others.
- C. Art is an activity that is best to do alone so you don't get distracted.
- D. Being friends with other people often means you have to change your hobbies.

# New York City Street Art: 5 Pointz

by Caitlyn Meagher

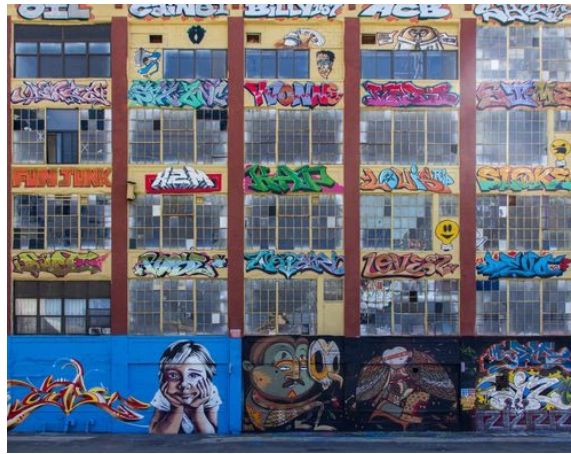


This is a photo of the front and side of 5 Pointz from January 2013.  
*Ezmosis (CC BY-SA 3.0)*

Sometimes art can be found in places you would least expect to find it. In New York, one of these places was a building called 5 Pointz.

The story of the space began when a businessman named Jerry Wolkoff bought an old **factory** building in Long Island City. It was huge-about 200,000 square feet. Although New York City was one of the first places where modern graffiti art began, artists had a difficult time finding spaces they could safely use. Most artists would spray graffiti art on subway cars or train stations. In the 1980s, the New York City government tried to put an end to graffiti. Police even arrested some artists. But in the 1990s, Wolkoff was asked to allow artists to create huge works of art on the walls of his building. He said yes, and the artists got to work. Artists later named this building 5 Pointz.

The name 5 Pointz describes the five boroughs, or divisions, of New York City. The boroughs are Queens, Manhattan, Staten Island, Brooklyn, and the Bronx. At 5 Pointz, the five boroughs came together as one through art. The building's walls gave artists a safe space to **express** themselves. People came from all over the world to work side by side with other great artists.



This is a photo of a wall of 5 Pointz from June 2011.

*P.Lindgren (CC BY-SA 4.0)*

Over the years, people continued to add their work to these walls. Many graffiti artists think that if someone paints over another person's work, it should be better than what was there before. Jonathan Cohen, a famous graffiti artist, believed in this idea. He loved 5 Pointz and would help to decide what art would go on its walls. He wanted to make sure this art was protected. He wanted to turn 5 Pointz into an outdoor museum.

Unfortunately, the owner of 5 Pointz had other plans. In 2013, the city approved construction of two new buildings that would take the place of 5 Pointz. 5 Pointz was set to be destroyed. Many members of the artistic community believed 5 Pointz was important for the culture of New York City. They tried to stop this new construction project, but they were unsuccessful. 5 Pointz came tumbling down in 2014.

The loss of 5 Pointz did not stop graffiti artists from creating art. Just recently, the Museum of Street Art opened in New York City. Located in the citizenM New York Bowery Hotel, the museum is in a 20-story stairwell that **displays** art from many of the artists who created murals at 5 Pointz. Although 5 Pointz can never be replaced, artists can continue to create and share their work with the people of New York City in a space **dedicated** to graffiti art.

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<b>display</b>				
<b>express</b>				
<b>factory</b>				

**2. Word Builder**

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ded	dis	press	fac
		ry	to
			i cate
			ex
			play

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

4. \_\_\_\_\_

**3. After reading and exploring the words through some activities...**

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<b>express</b>				
<b>factory</b>				

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What was 5 Pointz?

- A. a stairwell in Albany, New York that was covered in graffiti art
- B. a nickname for one of the five boroughs of New York City
- C. a building in New York City that was covered in graffiti art
- D. a well-known graffiti artist from Poughkeepsie, New York

2. How does the text contrast the 1980s and 1990s for graffiti artists in New York City?

- A. In the 1980s, graffiti artists didn't have a safe place to create art and the government tried to stop them, while, in the 1990s, graffiti artists were granted permission to create art on a building that later became known as 5 Pointz.
- B. In the 1980s, graffiti artists were allowed to create art on an old factory building in Long Island City while, in the 1990s, graffiti artists had to switch to creating art on a 20-story stairwell in the citizenM New York Bowery Hotel.
- C. In the 1980s, graffiti artists really wanted to paint words and names in their art, while, in the 1990s, graffiti artists changed their style to include political figures and famous people that were born in New York City.
- D. In the 1980s, graffiti artists didn't make money for the art they created on subway cars and train stations, while, in the 1990s, graffiti artists became successful after a national news channel did a documentary on them.

3. The art at 5 Pointz brought all types of people with different backgrounds together. What evidence from the text supports this conclusion?
- A. "The story of the space began when a businessman named Jerry Wolkoff bought an old factory building in Long Island City."
  - B. "At 5 Pointz, the five boroughs came together as one through art....People came from all over the world to work side by side with other great artists."
  - C. "In the 1980s, the New York City government tried to put an end to graffiti. Police even arrested some artists."
  - D. "In 2013, the city approved construction of two new buildings that would take the place of 5 Pointz. 5 Pointz was set to be destroyed."
4. How did graffiti artists find a new way to celebrate street art after 5 Pointz was destroyed?
- A. They continued to create and share their work at the new Museum of Street Art.
  - B. They held an annual festival at the location every year to honor its memory.
  - C. They started a project where they create art on doors of different businesses.
  - D. They cut out sections of the 5 Pointz building and placed them all over the city.

5. What is the main idea of this text?

- A. Jerry Wolkoff was a wealthy businessman who was a fan of New York City's graffiti artists so he bought an old factory building in Long Island City and granted artists the freedom to create on it.
- B. The Museum of Street Art is a 20-story stairwell museum that opened because of the destruction of 5 Pointz and is located in New York City's citizenM New York Bowery Hotel.
- C. 5 Pointz was a building in New York City that brought together all types of graffiti artists to create art and was destroyed in 2014, but street artists have found other ways to display their art.
- D. The five boroughs that make up New York City are Queens, Manhattan, Staten Island, Brooklyn, and the Bronx and each one of them have graffiti artists that contributed to 5 Pointz.

6. Read the following sentences from the text.

"The name 5 Pointz describes the five boroughs, or divisions, of New York City....At 5 Pointz, the five boroughs came together as one through art. The building's walls gave artists a safe space to **express** themselves. People came from all over the world to work side by side with other great artists."

As used in this excerpt, what does the word "**express**" most closely mean?

- A. become recognizable and famous
- B. ask for help on one's art technique
- C. get travel recommendations and tips
- D. show one's thoughts or feelings

7. Choose the answer that best completes the sentence below.

People in the artistic community tried to stop the destruction of 5 Pointz \_\_\_\_\_, despite their efforts, it was destroyed in 2014.

A. like

B. third

C. never

D. but

8. Why did members of the artistic community think 5 Pointz was important?

9. How does the graffiti art of 5 Pointz and the Museum of Street Art represent the culture of New York City? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

10. Although graffiti artists in New York City have a new safe place to create art, why can't 5 Pointz ever be replaced? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

# Street Art in Brazil

by Caitlyn Meagher



This is a photo of street art made by Os Gemeos.  
*Henrique Boney (CC BY-SA 3.0)*

Art can **transform** communities in small, but powerful, ways. In Brazil, one of the most popular forms of self-expression is street art. The walls in cities like São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro are covered in all different styles of street and graffiti art. In 2009, the Brazilian government made street and graffiti art legal, as long as artists had permission from the owners of the buildings. This law made it much easier for artists to use their talents around the city. Nearly 25 miles of a metro line is covered with street art. This art is inspired by the parts of the city the metro passes. Now, tourists from all around the world travel to see Brazil's colorful streets.

Who are some of these artists that **transform** Brazilian streets? Otavio Pandolfo and Gustavo Pandolfo are identical twins who both have a talent for street art. They started off breakdancing and soon became inspired by American hip-hop. The artist duo is called Os Gemeos. "Os gemeos" means "the twins" in Portuguese. Os Gemeos combines Brazilian culture and American hip-hop in their art. Their pieces often have **brilliant** colors. Their works often include paintings of bright yellow figures.



This is a photo of street art made by  
Nina Pandolfo.

*CoburnProjects (CC BY-SA 4.0)*

Although many Brazilian street artists are male, some women have made names for themselves. Nina Pandolfo is one of these women. She uses plastic, spray paint, and other materials to create portraits of women. These women have large eyes and expressive faces. She also paints people in magical **environments**. She wants to remind people that the small details in life can sometimes be the most beautiful.

Artists from around the world **promote** street art as a way to uplift communities. In Brazil, there are many nonprofits that teach graffiti techniques to young children. Through these lessons, children learn about Brazilian culture, improve their writing skills, and contribute to their community. The Brazilian street art movement continues to grow and be a popular form of self-expression and protest.

# Vocabulary

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<b>environment</b>				
<b>promote</b>				
<b>transform</b>				

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ron	ment	vi en	mote  bril	form  pro	liant	trans
1. _____	2. _____	3. _____				
4. _____						

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<b>transform</b>				

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. According to the text, what is one of the most popular forms of self-expression in Brazil?
  - A. samba
  - B. street art
  - C. capoeira
  
  - D. sculpture
  
2. In 2009, the Brazilian government changed their laws to make street art legal. What effect did this have for Brazil's streets?
  - A. Street artists were able to create much more easily and the streets became covered with street art.
  - B. People from all over the world moved to Brazil so they could create street art freely and safely.
  - C. The streets became so busy with art that the government reversed the law and painted over the art.
  
  - D. Businesses were unhappy with the new law and did not allow any street artists to create art on their property.

3. Read the following sentences from the text.

"Otavio Pandolfo and Gustavo Pandolfo are identical twins who both have a talent for street art. They started off breakdancing and soon became inspired by American hip-hop. The artist duo is called Os Gemeos. 'Os gemeos' means 'the twins' in Portuguese. Os Gemeos combines Brazilian culture and American hip-hop in their art."

What conclusion can you draw from this evidence?

- A. Portuguese is an easy language to learn if you are traveling to Brazil.
- B. Os Gemeos uses their art to express their unique interests and personalities.
- C. American hip-hop is a form of street art that has bright colors and yellow figures.
- D. Os gemeos combined Brazilian and American breakdancing techniques.

4. How does Nina Pandolfo use her art to convey a message?

- A. She creates short films about each one of her works so people will understand the importance and beauty of street art and try to change laws in their country.
- B. She paints large portraits of women to remind the people of Brazil and the world that there are female street artists too and to inspire other women to become street artists.
- C. She paints women with large and expressive faces and people in magical environments to remind people that life's beauty can often be found in its small details.
- D. She creates art for the many nonprofits in Brazil that are teaching children graffiti techniques because she believes in their mission to teach children about Brazilian culture.

5. What is the main idea of this text?

- A. Colorful street art covers the streets of Brazil and is an important part of Brazilian culture.
- B. There are more male street artists in Brazil, like Os Gemeos, than there are female ones.
- C. Many nonprofits in Brazil teach young children techniques to create their own street art.
- D. Almost 25 miles of the metro in Brazil are covered with street art inspired by parts of the city.