

• Reading Comprehension 6 Level 8

Directions: Read the passage. Then answer the questions below.

Dear Editor,

I am writing in response to the article “Protecting Our Public Spaces” in issue 14, published this spring. In it, the author claims that “all graffiti is vandalism, pure and simple, and offers no benefit to our public spaces.” I would like to point out that many people believe that graffiti is an art form that can benefit our public spaces just as much as sculpture, fountains, or other, more accepted art forms.

People who object to graffiti usually do so more because of *where* it is, not *what* it is. They argue, as your author does, that posting graffiti in public places constitutes an illegal act of property damage. But the location of such graffiti should not prevent the images themselves from being considered genuine art.

I would argue that graffiti is the ultimate public art form. Spray paint is a medium unlike any other. Through graffiti, the entire world has become a canvas. No one has to pay admission or travel to a museum to see this kind of art. The artists usually do not receive payment for their efforts. These works of art dotting the urban landscape are available, free of charge, to everyone who passes by.

To be clear, I do not consider random words or names sprayed on stop signs to be art. **Plenty of graffiti is just vandalism, pure and simple.** However, there is also graffiti that is breathtaking in its **intricate** detail, its realism, or its creativity. It takes great talent to create such involved designs with spray paint. Are these creators not artists just because they use a can of spray paint instead of a paintbrush, or because they cover the side of a building rather than a canvas?

To declare that all graffiti is vandalism, and nothing more, is an overly simplistic statement that I find out of place in such a thoughtful publication as your magazine. Furthermore, graffiti is not going anywhere, so we might as well find a way to live with it and enjoy its benefits. One option could be to make a percentage of public space, such as walls or benches in parks, open to graffiti artists. By doing this, the public might feel like part owners of these works of art, rather than just the victims of a crime.

Regards,

Derrick Milton

Questions

- 1) In his letter, Derrick Milton argues that graffiti
 - A. is the only art form that is free
 - B. provides more public benefits than sculpture or fountains do
 - C. is best viewed on public walls rather than canvas
 - D. should be judged on its artistic qualities rather than its location

- 2) Based on information in the passage, it can be understood that the author of the article “Protecting Our Public Spaces” apparently believes that graffiti
 - A. is not an art form
 - B. can only sometimes be considered a work of art
 - C. should be restricted to places where it is allowed
 - D. is too simple to be considered art

- 3) According to Derrick Milton, random words sprayed on stop signs are not
- A. vandalism
 - B. art
 - C. illegal
 - D. creative
- 4) Based on its use in paragraph 4, which of the following accurately describes something that is **intricate**?
- A. Everyone was amazed to see the hot air balloon finally swell with air and lift off over the trees.
 - B. On the enormous billboard, a painted can of soda stood nearly 12 feet high.
 - C. The photograph was so sharply focused that you could see the individual eyelashes on the subjects' faces.
 - D. The maze had many different paths that curled around each other in a complicated pattern.
- 5) Which sentence from the passage best illustrates the author's feelings about graffiti art?
- A. "I would like to point out that many people believe that graffiti is an art form that can benefit our public spaces just as much as sculpture, fountains, or other, more accepted art forms."
 - B. "People who object to graffiti usually do so more because of *where* it is, not *what* it is."
 - C. "Spray paint is a medium unlike any other."
 - D. "To declare that all graffiti is vandalism, and nothing more, is an overly simplistic statement that I find out of place in such a thoughtful publication as your magazine."
- 6) In paragraph 4, Derrick Milton states, "Plenty of graffiti is just vandalism, pure and simple." He most likely makes this statement in order to
- A. agree with the author of "Protect Our Public Spaces"
 - B. clarify the limits of his position
 - C. support his overall argument
 - D. summarize the counterargument to his own position
- 7) Derrick Milton concludes his letter by
- A. criticizing the magazine
 - B. offering a solution
 - C. restating his position
 - D. identifying the benefits of graffiti

Answers and Explanations

1) **D**

In paragraph 1, Derrick Milton makes the claim that “graffiti is an art form.” In paragraph 2, he notes that “people who object to graffiti usually do so more because of *where* it is, not *what* it is.” This suggests that many people judge graffiti based on its location, but Derrick argues that this is wrongheaded. In paragraph 4, he writes, “However, there is also graffiti that is breathtaking in its intricate detail, its realism, or its creativity. It takes great talent to create such involved designs with spray paint. Are these creators not artists just because they use a can of spray paint instead of a paintbrush, or because they cover the side of a building rather than a canvas?” From this we can understand that Derrick argues that graffiti should be judged on its artistic qualities rather than its location. Therefore **(D)** is correct. In paragraph 3, Derrick argues that graffiti is a free art form. He claims, “These works of art dotting the urban landscape are available, free of charge, to everyone who passes by.” However, he does not claim that it is the only art form that is free. This means **(A)** is incorrect. Derrick argues in paragraph 1 that graffiti can provide as many public benefits as sculpture or fountains, but he does not suggest that it provides more benefits. This makes **(B)** incorrect. In paragraph 3, Derrick states, “Through graffiti, the entire world has become a canvas.” Later, however, Derrick describes graffiti as covering “stop signs,” “the side of a building,” “park benches,” and “walls.” By this we can understand that graffiti by definition is not applied to a canvas. Therefore **(C)** is incorrect.

2) **A**

In paragraph 1, Derrick Milton, the author of the letter, writes, “I am writing in response to the article ‘Protecting Our Public Spaces’ in issue 14, published this spring. In it, the author claims that ‘all graffiti is vandalism, pure and simple, and offers no benefit to our public spaces.’” This tells us that the author of the article “Protecting Our Public Spaces” believes that graffiti provides no benefit to public spaces. Throughout the letter, Derrick Milton disagrees with the author of the article by arguing that graffiti is indeed an art form and as such does provide benefits to the public. Since Derrick disagrees with the author of the article, we can infer that the author of the article apparently believes that graffiti is not an art form. Therefore **(A)** is correct. The author of the letter, Derrick Milton, claims that graffiti can only sometimes be considered a work of art. However, we cannot infer that this is also the belief of the author of the article “Protecting Our Public Spaces.” Therefore **(B)** is incorrect. The author of the article claims that “all graffiti is vandalism, pure and simple.” This suggests that the author apparently believes graffiti is not allowed anywhere, because he or she believes it is an illegal act of vandalism everywhere. This means **(C)** is incorrect. Although we can infer that the author of the article apparently believes graffiti is not art, we cannot infer the reasoning behind this belief. Therefore, we cannot infer that the author of the article believes that graffiti is too simple to be considered art. This makes **(D)** incorrect.

3) **B**

To answer this detail question correctly, we need to find where the author discusses graffiti such as random words sprayed on stop signs in the passage. A good way to do this is to scan the topic sentence of each paragraph, since this sentence will likely tell us what information can be found in the rest of that paragraph. The topic sentence of paragraph 4 reads: “To be clear, I do not consider random words or names sprayed on stop signs to be art.” This lets us know that the details we are looking for can likely be found in paragraph 4. In paragraph 4, Derrick Milton writes, “To be clear, I do not consider random words or names sprayed on stop signs to be art.” This means that according to Derrick, random words sprayed on stop signs are not art. Therefore **(B)** is correct. Derrick says in the next sentence that “Plenty of graffiti is just vandalism, pure and simple.” This suggests that he considers random words sprayed on stop signs to be vandalism, and therefore illegal. This eliminates choices **(A)** and **(C)**. Later in the paragraph, Derrick discusses other works of graffiti that are detailed, realistic, and creative. However, he does not say that random words sprayed on stop signs are not creative. He may believe this to be true, but Derrick does not say it in his letter. This means **(D)** is incorrect.

4) **D**

intricate (*adjective*): having many different parts; complex; complicated.

In paragraph 4, the author writes, “However, there is also graffiti that is breathtaking in its intricate detail, its realism, or its creativity. It takes great talent to create such involved designs with spray paint.” In this paragraph, the author argues that some graffiti can be considered art because it takes “great talent” to create pieces with “such involved designs” and “intricate detail” using only cans of spray paint. Since spray paint is sprayed, it can be understood that it is difficult to form complicated details using it. To make such complicated details, it would take a talented artist. From this we can understand that *intricate* detail must be involved or complex, something that only a talented artist could accomplish with such a medium. A maze with many different paths that curl around each other in a complicated pattern could also be considered complex. This lets us know that **(D)** accurately describes something that is intricate. Therefore it is the correct choice. Choices **(A)**, **(B)**, and **(C)** do not accurately describe something that is involved or complex. Therefore they are incorrect.

5) **A**

Derrick Milton writes this letter to object to a statement made in an article that “all graffiti is vandalism, pure and simple, and offers no benefit to our public spaces.” Throughout the passage, Derrick provides reasons why he believes that all graffiti is not just vandalism and why it can sometimes qualify as art. In paragraph 3, he writes that graffiti is “the ultimate public art form” because it is “free of charge” and can be seen by “everyone who passes by.” In paragraph 4, he explains that it takes “great talent” to create “graffiti that is breathtaking in its intricate detail, its realism, or its creativity.” From these details, we can understand that the author believes that graffiti is not just vandalism, it can be an art form, and as such it can offer benefits to public spaces. The sentence that best illustrates these feelings is: “I would like to point out that many people believe that graffiti is an art form that can benefit our public spaces just as much as sculpture, fountains, or other, more accepted art forms.” Therefore **(A)** is correct. The sentence “People who object to graffiti usually do so more because of *where* it is, not *what* it is” illustrates how others feel about graffiti art, not how the author feels. This means **(B)** is incorrect. The sentence “Spray paint is a medium unlike any other” illustrates how the author feels about spray paint, but not how the author feels about graffiti art in general. This makes **(C)** incorrect. The sentence “To declare that all graffiti is vandalism, and nothing more, is an overly simplistic statement that I find out of place in such a thoughtful

publication as your magazine” illustrates how the author feels about the statement that all graffiti is vandalism. However, it does not illustrate how the author feels specifically about graffiti art. Therefore **(D)** is incorrect.

6) **B**

To answer this question correctly, it is helpful to look at the context surrounding this sentence. In paragraph 4, Derrick Milton states, “Plenty of graffiti is just vandalism, pure and simple.” In the previous sentence, he claims, “To be clear, I do not consider random words or names sprayed on stop signs to be art.” From this we can infer that Derrick wants to clarify that he does not believe that all graffiti qualifies as art. In the following sentence, he specifies the type of graffiti that he believes is art: “graffiti that is breathtaking in its intricate detail, its realism, or its creativity.” The context tells us that Derrick wants to be sure we know that he does not believe all graffiti qualifies as art. He notes that there is plenty of graffiti that is nothing more than vandalism in order to clarify the limits of his position. Therefore **(B)** is correct. Derrick does not go so far as to agree completely with the author of “Protect Our Public Spaces.” Instead, he concedes one point on which they may agree. This means **(A)** is incorrect. This statement is an exception to his overall argument that graffiti is an art form, so it does not necessarily support his overall argument. This makes **(C)** incorrect. This statement qualifies Derrick’s overall position. It is something that limits his own position, not a summary of it the counterargument to his position. This eliminates **(D)**.

7) **B**

In the final paragraph, Derrick Milton writes: “Furthermore, graffiti is not going anywhere, so we might as well find a way to live with it and enjoy its benefits. One option could be to make a percentage of public space, such as walls or benches in parks, open to graffiti artists. By doing this, the public might feel like part owners of these works of art, rather than just the victims of a crime.” In these sentences, Derrick identifies a problem, which is that graffiti is not going anywhere. Then he offers an “option” to make the public more receptive to graffiti: to open up some public space to graffiti artists so they have a place to make their art legally. This option could be considered a solution to the problem of how people view graffiti. This means that Derrick concludes his letter by offering a solution. Therefore **(B)** is correct. Derrick writes, “To declare that all graffiti is vandalism, and nothing more, is an overly simplistic statement that I find out of place in such a thoughtful publication as your magazine.” Although he criticizes the statement made in the article, he actually compliments the magazine by calling it a “thoughtful publication.” This eliminates **(A)**. While Derrick does restate his position and identify the benefits of graffiti at other points in his letter, he does not do these things in the concluding paragraph. Therefore choices **(C)** and **(D)** are incorrect.