



Graphic Courtesy of Le Mans-Carbay Body Repairs

1 Graffiti is when words or pictures are scratched into or sprayed onto walls and other surfaces. Graffiti is a very hot topic that divides a lot of people. There are those who believe that graffiti is a form of vandalism as it involves someone damaging another person's property on purpose. Vandalism is against the

law. Others say that graffiti is a very important form of new art.

2 Most graffiti is painted onto buildings, bridges and train carriages. Sadly, the people creating the graffiti do not always ask for permission. This is especially so in the case of *tagging*,



which is when someone quickly scribbles a nickname in spray-paint. People who tag do it for the glory that comes with writing their name on hard-to-reach places. These are places that people have to break into or that are dangerous, such as on moving trains. Due to the danger involved, tagging has to be done quickly. This makes tagging look messy, ruining the look of whatever surface it is painted onto. Ruining a surface without the permission of its owner is against the law. This is vandalism. In the 1960s, people created graffiti to protest about war. Pictures, symbols and words were designed to make people think about political issues. Having these in public places meant that everyone could see them. Tagging your name on a train is very different to promoting peace. It has no purpose on public property.

3 Graffiti does not always ruin a building. There are a lot of talented artists who work in graffiti - they paint beautiful pictures on the sides of

buildings. If anything, such art can improve the look of a boring place. A lot of artists are now hired to paint on walls. In this case graffiti actually is a form of art. Even so, if the owners don't give their permission, the artist is still breaking the law.

4 Why is this so? Well, even if the painting is beautiful, the owner of the building may not want it. This means that the owner is forced to pay a lot of money to have the image removed. Billions of dollars are spent each year to clean up graffiti all around the world. A large amount of this money is paid by governments - money they could be spending on schools, hospitals and other important services.

5 A good solution to this would be to have special areas for graffiti artists to work on. Local councils around the world have donated space that any artist can use. Amazing talents are developed here, as artists can take their time to work on projects without fear of being arrested. Accepting graffiti stops kids from breaking the law. Kids can express themselves and stay safe at the same time. A lot of people like this idea. It teaches kids respect for spaces, as they 'own' the wall they're painting on.

6 As this discussion shows, graffiti can be an art form and is not always vandalism. Some important steps have to be made to make this clear. Kids should learn to look after themselves and not take foolish risks for little reward. People also need to share their environments with the others they live with. This includes accepting the opinions of others. Just because you don't like what other people are doing, doesn't mean that it's not creative.



Questions

- What was the purpose of graffiti in the 1960s?
 - to get glory for tagging difficult spots
 - to promote peace
 - to encourage kids to become artists
- Ruining a surface without its owner's permission is
 - art.
 - graffiti.
 - vandalism.
- Why are artists hired to paint on walls?
 - to make a building look better
 - to protest against war
 - to break the law
- Who has donated space for kids to paint on?
 - businesses
 - local councils
 - artists
- Educating people about the proper use of graffiti
 - means that no one will break the law again.
 - teaches people to respect spaces.
 - will increase the use of tagging.
- Why do you think local councils are encouraging legal graffiti?
 - to be popular with children
 - to make towns more beautiful
 - to save money spent on removing graffiti for more important things

Vocabulary

Find words in the text that match the meanings below. The word is in the section shown in brackets.

- Deliberate damage to property (1)
- Praise or honour (2)
- To be gifted or artistic (3)
- The answer to a problem (5)
- The opposite of wise (6)

Grammar

Find an **adjective** (a word to describe a noun) in these sentences.

- There are a lot of talented artists.
- Amazing talents are created here.
- This makes tagging look messy.
- Important steps have to be made .

Back To The Text...

- Trains are often tagged.
 - true
 - false
- The writer believes that some graffiti is okay.
 - true
 - false
- The writer believes that graffiti affects more than just the look of things.
 - true
 - false

Sequencing

What does the writer discuss first. Choose **a** or **b**.

- The problems associated with tagging.
 - The anti-war protests of the 1960s.
- The issue of vandalism.
 - The costs that result from graffiti.

Think About This

- The writer suggests that graffiti artists should consider
 - the cost of paint.
 - other people's property.
 - other graffiti artists.
- Graffiti artists will most likely use
 - brushes.
 - spray cans.
 - crayons.
 - paint tins.
- Providing legal graffiti areas may
 - increase vandalism.
 - keep the police very busy.
 - stop some kids taking dangerous risks.

Challenge Option

Writing: Graffiti is a hot issue.
Write down your thoughts.

