

Analyzing Graffiti

1. Listen to/read the lyrics of the song "Graffiti the World" by Rehab. What is his opinion of graffiti, and the fact that it is considered a crime? (**FULL SENTENCE**)

2. View the three images of graffiti provided on the PowerPoint. Fill in the chart below.

Graffiti Description	What issue does the image relate to?	What does the artist hope that audience will do (its message)?	Is it effective? Why/why not?
#1			
#2			
#3			

Graffiti – Art or Vandalism?

Why Graffiti is Art?

Not everyone likes every painting of Van Gogh, in the same way it is inevitable people will disagree about the quality of a piece of graffiti. It's easy to see the artistic skill required to produce an impressive piece of graffiti. Many of the people who are critical of graffiti as an art form also have problems with other forms of modern art. For something to be considered art it doesn't have to be popular.

Some people who complain about graffiti believe that it doesn't have the history and stylistic conventions of conventional art however graffiti is almost as old as mankind itself. Early forms of graffiti have been found throughout history including the illustrious societies of ancient Greece and during the time of the pharaohs in Egypt. Not only does graffiti have a historical precedent, it also shares stylistic conventions and forms like any form of more widely accepted art.

The most impressive graffiti requires meticulous planning and preparation. Many people think of graffiti as an opportunist crime, when many pieces actually take hours or even weeks to plan and prepare. The graffiti artist pays the same attention to detail as more highly regarded professionals, and on many occasions may even put in more effort and thought.

It is also true that many people are totally unconnected to the 'real' art world. The vast majority of the general public don't visit art galleries and have relatively little contact with artists. This majority of people often have a greater connection to graffiti. It is within their world; they may even know the artists. It is far more approachable.

Many artists see the purpose of their art to inspire debate. If you see this as a way of judging art then there is no arguing that graffiti is art. It is one of the most debated topics in the world of art and is hugely controversial.

Why Graffiti is Vandalism?

There is no arguing that graffiti often does serious damage to property. While often the vandalism in public spaces might seem like a victimless crime, that's very often not the case. Also, when graffiti happens on private property it can cause real distress for the owners. Even if there is no connection between graffiti and more serious crime, the distinction becomes more blurred when it's your property that has been damaged.

Besides the actual damage to the property, graffiti often goes hand in hand with trespassing. While many people may debate the ethics of graffiti, the law is crystal clear when it comes to trespassing. It's not just the issue of criminal behaviour; often the trespassing can put the life of the graffiti artists and others in danger when they trespass on railways and motorways.

People also shouldn't forget the cost that graffiti removal requires. Though many graffiti products are affordable, it is an expense that property owners would never have to incur were it not for the graffiti. Sometimes they would also have to hire professional graffiti removal firms who inevitably cost a significant amount of money.

While many people argue that graffiti is art, most of the graffiti that graces walls and surfaces around the world isn't the highly stylised pieces described by advocates; they are scrappy scrawled names or tags. These can not be described as art and are nothing but vandalism.

Graffiti - Art or Vandalism?

1. Based on the article, list **at least** three pros and three cons of graffiti:

Pros (good things)	Cons (bad things)

2. **Written Response:** Respond to the following questions in **at least four sentences**.

*Do you think that graffiti is an effective way to share a message or to protest something?
Why/why not? What are some other ways you could achieve the same thing?*
