Name: _____ Date: _____

The Mural

Circle group

The wall behind the community center had always been blank. It was long and gray, with spots of old tape and faded flyers. Then one Saturday in April, the city made an announcement. A mural would be painted on the wall. Anyone in the neighborhood could send in a design.

Jada loved to draw, but she kept her sketchbook mostly hidden. In art class, she sat in the back. She never shared her ideas. She was sure her drawings were not good enough to show anyone. When her best friend Lena found out about the contest, she would not let it go.

"You have to enter," Lena said. "Your drawings of the river and the old bridge are the best I've ever seen."

"They're just doodles," Jada said softly. "Other people will have ideas like real artists."

"Then do it for the neighborhood," Lena said. "Everybody knows that bridge. You draw what we all see."

For two weeks, Jada worked at her kitchen table late at night. She drew, erased, and started over. The day before the deadline, she almost threw it all away. But Lena came over with a bag of markers. She sat with Jada until the last line was inked.

A month later, the judges picked a winner. When Jada heard her name, her face got hot. She could not believe it. All summer, volunteers of all ages helped her paint the wall. The river curved across it, and the bridge stood tall in the middle. Neighbors brought lemonade. They stayed to talk about the old bridge.

When the mural was done, Jada stood back and looked at it for a long time. Her art was not hidden in a notebook now. It belonged to everyone. Sharing it had made her braver than she ever thought she could be.

Questions

1. What did the city say one Saturday in April?

_____

_____

2. Why did Jada hide her sketchbook?

_____

_____

3. What did Lena do to help Jada?

_____

_____

4. Why did Lena say, "You draw what we all see"?

_____

_____

5. What is the big lesson of the story?

_____

_____

Words to know

mural: a large painting made right on a wall
doodle: a quick drawing made without much planning
deadline: the time by which something must be finished
volunteer: a person who helps without being paid

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

The Mural

Triangle group

The wall behind the community center had been blank for as long as Jada could remember. It was long and gray, speckled with old tape and faded flyers. Then, one Saturday in April, the city announced that a mural would be painted there, and that anyone in the neighborhood was welcome to submit a design.

Jada loved to draw, but she kept her sketchbook mostly hidden. At school she sat in the back of the art room and never volunteered her opinions, and she was convinced that her drawings were not good enough for anybody else to see. When her best friend Lena discovered that a contest was being held, she refused to let the matter drop.

"You have to enter," Lena insisted. "Your drawings of the river and the old bridge are the best I have ever seen."

"They are only doodles," Jada mumbled. "Other people will have professional ideas."

"Then do it for the neighborhood," Lena said. "Everybody knows that bridge. You draw what we all see."

For two weeks, Jada worked at her kitchen table late into the night, sketching and erasing and starting over. On the day before the deadline, she nearly threw the whole thing away. But Lena stopped by with a bag of markers and sat beside her until the final line was inked.

A month later, the judges announced their decision. When Jada heard her name, her face burned with surprise. Over the summer, volunteers of all ages helped her paint the wall, with the river curving across it and the bridge standing proudly in the middle. Neighbors brought lemonade and stayed to chat about their memories of the old bridge.

On the day the mural was finished, Jada stood back and studied it for a long time. For the first time, her art was not hidden in a notebook. It belonged to everyone around her, and she realized that sharing it had made her braver than she had ever believed she could be.

Questions

1. What did the city announce one Saturday in April?

_____

_____

2. Why did Jada keep her sketchbook mostly hidden?

_____

_____

3. How did Lena help Jada?

_____

_____

4. Why did Lena say, "You draw what we all see"?

_____

_____

5. What is the theme, or main message, of the story?

_____

_____

Words to know

mural: a large painting made right on a wall
speckled: covered with small spots
doodle: a quick drawing made without much planning
deadline: the time by which something must be finished
volunteer: a person who helps without being paid

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

The Mural

Square group

For as long as Jada could remember, the wall behind the community center had stood blank: a long, gray expanse speckled with remnants of old tape and faded flyers. Then, one Saturday in April, the city announced that a mural would be painted there, and that anyone in the neighborhood was welcome to submit a design for consideration.

Jada adored drawing, but she kept her sketchbook mostly concealed. At school, she occupied a seat in the back of the art room and never volunteered her opinions, thoroughly convinced that her drawings were not accomplished enough for anybody else to examine. When her best friend Lena discovered that a competition was being held, however, she absolutely refused to let the matter drop.

"You have to enter," Lena insisted. "Your drawings of the river and the old bridge are genuinely the best I have ever seen."

"They are only doodles," Jada mumbled, avoiding her friend's eyes. "Other people will submit professional ideas."

"Then do it for the neighborhood," Lena countered. "Everybody recognizes that bridge. You draw what all of us see."

For two weeks, Jada labored at her kitchen table late into the night, sketching, erasing, and beginning again. On the evening before the deadline, she very nearly discarded the entire project. But Lena appeared with a bag of markers and remained beside her until the final line was inked.

A month later, the judges announced their decision, and when Jada heard her own name, her face burned with astonishment. Throughout the summer, volunteers of every age helped her transfer the design onto the wall, with the river curving gracefully across it and the bridge standing proudly at its center. Neighbors delivered lemonade and lingered to reminisce about their memories of the old bridge.

On the afternoon the mural was finally completed, Jada stepped back and studied it for a long time. For the first time, her artwork was not concealed within a notebook. It belonged to the entire community, and she recognized that sharing it had made her considerably braver than she had ever imagined she could become.

Questions

1. What announcement did the city make one Saturday in April?

_____

_____

2. What explains Jada's habit of concealing her sketchbook?

_____

_____

3. In what specific ways did Lena support Jada?

_____

_____

4. What is Lena's reasoning when she says, "You draw what all of us see"?

_____

_____

5. What theme does the story develop through Jada's experience?

_____

_____

Words to know

mural: a large painting made right on a wall
speckled: covered with small spots
doodle: a quick drawing made without much planning
deadline: the time by which something must be finished
volunteer: a person who helps without being paid

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

For the teacher: The Mural

Each student sheet carries a shape, not a level. The same topic and facts, written three ways.

Circle: The Mural

Easier · 302 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 3.5

1. A mural would be painted on the wall behind the community center, and anyone in the neighborhood could send in a design.
2. She was shy and thought her drawings were just doodles, not as good as real artists' ideas.
3. She told Jada to enter, and she brought markers and stayed with her until the design was done.
4. Everyone in the neighborhood knows the river and the bridge, so Jada's drawings would mean something to everyone.
5. Sharing what you are good at can make you braver, and a good friend can help you try something scary.

Triangle: The Mural

This passage · 331 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 6.4

1. A mural would be painted on the wall behind the community center, and anyone in the neighborhood could submit a design.
2. She was shy about her drawings and thought they were just doodles compared with professional ideas.
3. She encouraged Jada to enter and brought markers and stayed with her to finish the design before the deadline.
4. Everyone in the neighborhood knows the river and the bridge, so Jada's drawings would speak to everyone and be a good fit for a community mural.
5. Sharing your talents can make you braver, and support from a friend can help you try something that scares you.

Square: The Mural

Harder · 347 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 9.4

1. That a mural would be painted on the wall behind the community center and that anyone in the neighborhood could submit a design.
2. She was shy and convinced her drawings were mere doodles, not as accomplished as the professional ideas she expected others to submit.
3. She persuaded Jada to enter, then arrived with markers the night before the deadline and stayed until the design was finished.
4. The river and the bridge are familiar to the whole neighborhood, so Jada's drawings would resonate with everyone and suit a community mural.

5. Sharing your talents can build courage, and a supportive friend can help you attempt something that frightens you.