

## Street Artist

In 1980's New York, art was all around. It was not only in the famous art museums, but also on the walls and streets. This street art was called graffiti. And one of the most famous graffiti artists was Jean-Michel Basquiat.

Jean-Michel grew up in an artistic household. His mother was from Puerto Rico. She was a graphic designer. His father was from Haiti. He was a musician.

Both of his parents encouraged Jean-Michel to express himself through art. He drew on the subway walls. He used spray paint to create big murals.

Jean-Michel used simple shapes and lines in his art. He also used symbols. Two of his favorite symbols were skulls and crowns.

When Jean-Michel was young, he wanted to be a cartoonist. He drew a cartoon with dinosaur characters. He said, "I like kids' work more than work by real artists any day."

Jean-Michel liked to wear expensive suits when he was painting. The suits would get covered in paint splatters. He then wore the suits to parties to talk about his work.

Over time, Jean-Michel's art became more and more famous. In 2017, one of his paintings sold at an auction. It broke the record for the highest price ever paid for a painting.



Now you can see Jean-Michel's art in famous museums in New York and around the world. Some of his street art has been painted over. But some still exists. If you ever ride the subway in New York, look carefully and you might see it!



This page has been intentionally left blank.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What was the profession of Jean-Michel's father?
  - a. Graffiti artist
  - b. Graphic designer
  - c. Musician
  - d. Painter
  
2. What symbols did Jean-Michel use in his art?
  - a. Skulls
  - b. Roses
  - c. Crowns
  - d. A and C
  
3. Why did Jean-Michel wear suits with paint splatters?
  - a. Because he wanted to bring attention to his work
  - b. Because he didn't like to do laundry
  - c. Because he couldn't afford clean suits
  - d. Because he was a messy painter
  
4. What does it mean to express yourself through art?
  - a. To use art to show your feelings
  - b. To use words in your art
  - c. To spray paint murals
  - d. To paint on walls and streets

Instructions for teachers:

These questions can be used to assess understanding of the reading passage.

The item in bold is the correct answer for each question.

1. What was the profession of Jean-Michel's father?
  - a. Graffiti artist
  - b. Graphic designer
  - c. Musician**
  - d. Painter
2. What symbols did Jean-Michel use in his art?
  - a. Skulls
  - b. Roses
  - c. Crowns
  - d. A and C**
3. Why did Jean-Michel wear suits with paint splatters?
  - a. Because he wanted to bring attention to his work**
  - b. Because he didn't like to do laundry
  - c. Because he couldn't afford clean suits
  - d. Because he was a messy painter
4. What does it mean to express yourself through art?
  - a. To use art to show your feelings**
  - b. To use words in your art
  - c. To spray paint murals
  - d. To paint on walls and streets