Who Gets the Wall?

Social norms, public art, and responses to rule breaking

SS24.S.6 "Identify and describe human behaviors that deviate from social norms.* 6a Analyze deviance from each of the three sociological perspectives (interactionist, functional, and conflict)..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle two details that show how permission changes whether painting breaks a rule, and underline the specific detail each sociological perspective examines, not just the perspective's name. Number the three proposed responses: 1 for a deserved penalty, 2 for changing future choices, and 3 for discouraging others.

When Writing Becomes a Rule Break

1. In 1970s New York City, some young people painted names on subway cars without permission. A freshly painted train could carry a writer's name across the city, but transit officials saw damaged property and paid crews to remove the paint. The same letter forms on a wall approved for a public mural would not break that rule. Deviance is behavior that violates a group's social norms, which can change with place, time, and permission. Some riders admired the bold lettering, while others objected to the cost of cleaning it. Their reactions show that people do not always judge a behavior alike.

2. An interactionist asks how everyday encounters create meanings. When officials call a painter a "vandal," that label can shape how riders treat the person and how the painter sees themself. A functionalist asks what a rule or its violation does for society. Rules against painting trains protect shared property, while arguments over graffiti can prompt a community to clarify where art is welcome. A conflict theorist asks whose power shapes the rule and its enforcement. If wealthy advertisers can buy space on trains but young artists cannot, unequal access to public visibility may affect who gets punished.

3. Public responses have shifted. In the 1970s and 1980s, New York transit officials removed subway graffiti and increased security; today, some cities also invite artists to paint approved walls. These options are not identical: a permitted mural follows a different rule from an unauthorized mark. Punishments can reflect different goals. A judge ordering a penalty proportional to damage treats wrongdoing as deserving punishment, a retributive aim. Offering a supervised art program tries to change future choices, a rehabilitative aim. Posting a clear fine aims to discourage others from painting without permission, a deterrent aim. One policy may serve more than one goal.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why was painting a name on a subway car considered deviant, while painting similar letters on an approved mural wall might not be?

2. How would an interactionist and a functionalist examine different parts of the subway painting example? Use one detail for each.

3. How would a conflict theorist use the comparison between advertisers and young artists to question the rule's enforcement?

4. Contrast the past response to subway graffiti with a present option in some cities. Then match the penalty, art program, and fine to their punishment goals.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine a school that lets varsity athletes skip the cafeteria line but disciplines other students for doing so. In one paragraph, identify the norm and analyze this situation through interactionist, functional, and conflict perspectives; then propose a school response and name its punishment goal.

Who Gets the Wall?

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Circle two details that show how permission changes whether painting breaks a rule, and underline the specific detail each sociological perspective examines, not just the perspective's name. Number the three proposed responses: 1 for a deserved penalty, 2 for changing future choices, and 3 for discouraging others. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why was painting a name on a subway car considered deviant, while painting similar letters on an approved mural wall might not be?	**Painting the subway car without permission broke a rule protecting shared property. Painting on an approved mural wall would follow the rule for that space.**
2	How would an interactionist and a functionalist examine different parts of the subway painting example? Use one detail for each.	**An interactionist might examine how the label "vandal" affects the painter's identity and others' reactions. A functionalist might examine how the rule protects shared property or how debate clarifies where art is welcome.**
3	How would a conflict theorist use the comparison between advertisers and young artists to question the rule's enforcement?	**A conflict theorist would ask whether people with money can gain public visibility while young artists without money are punished for seeking it.**
4	Contrast the past response to subway graffiti with a present option in some cities. Then match the penalty, art program, and fine to their punishment goals.	**New York transit officials removed graffiti and increased security; some cities now also offer approved walls. A proportional penalty is retributive, an art program is rehabilitative, and a posted fine is deterrent.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The norm is to wait your turn in the cafeteria line, so cutting it is deviant for students who are not given an exception. An interactionist would examine how calling nonathletes "rule breakers" while praising athletes changes students' views of each group. A functionalist would note that orderly lines help everyone get food fairly, while inconsistent rules can weaken cooperation. A conflict theorist would ask why athletes receive privileges that other students lack. I would end the exception and announce the same consequence for all line cutters, using a clear penalty to deter future cutting.

Accept other passage-supported details for each perspective. For the open task, accept a different school response if the named punishment goal matches the response's purpose.