# Walls That Speak

Trace a young artist's changing view of the past and future.

**ELA.10.R.1.3** "Analyze coming of age experiences reflected in a text and how the author represents conflicting perspectives."

NAME _____ DATE _____

## 1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

**YOUR JOB** Underline two details that reveal Lena's changing perspective, then circle one detail that represents her mother's view and one that represents Malik's view.

### The Rialto Mural

1 On Saturday morning, Lena stood outside the old Rialto Theater with a brush tucked into her back pocket. The neighborhood arts council had asked students to paint a mural on its boarded windows, and Lena had submitted the winning sketch. Her design showed teenagers carrying lanterns through a dark street. Now her mother, who managed the theater's cleanup crew, frowned at the drawing. “People need to see what this place was,” she said, pointing to a faded poster of dancers. Lena heard pride in her mother’s voice, but also a warning: Do not erase what matters.

2 Lena wanted the mural to face forward. To her, the lanterns were not a rejection of the theater's past. They represented students who had spent years walking past broken glass and locked doors, wondering whether adults expected them to stay invisible. Her friend Malik agreed. He said the mural should show “who lives here now,” then climbed a ladder and covered a cracked pane with blue paint. Yet Lena paused before painting the space beside the old poster. She remembered her mother describing crowded Saturday shows and the tips that bought Lena’s first winter coat. The empty wall suddenly seemed less empty.

3 At noon, Lena asked her mother to bring a photograph from the theater's busiest year. They taped it near the mural's corner. Lena then changed one lantern into a small gold ticket, which her mother noticed without speaking. Malik rolled his eyes at first. “It looks like an advertisement,” he said. Lena almost argued, but she explained that the ticket was not asking people to return to the old theater. It showed that the building had given something to her family. When her mother handed Lena the last brush, Lena understood that choosing a future did not require pretending the past had no claim on her.

## 2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What does Lena want the mural to show at first? Use one detail from the passage to explain her perspective.

2. What makes Lena pause before she paints beside the old poster, and how does this moment change her thinking?

3. How do Lena's mother and Malik disagree about the mural? What does each person value?

4. How does the author use the photograph and the gold ticket to show Lena's coming-of-age experience?

## 3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence analytical paragraph about how Lena handles the conflict between past and future. Include details that represent two perspectives and explain how the author shows Lena's growth.

ANSWER KEY

# Walls That Speak

GRADE 10 · ELA.10.R.1.3

## PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two details that reveal Lena's changing perspective, then circle one detail that represents her mother's view and one that represents Malik's view. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

## PART 2 · ANSWERS

| # | QUESTION | ANSWER |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | What does Lena want the mural to show at first? Use one detail from the passage to explain her perspective. | **Lena wants the mural to focus on the future and make current teenagers visible. The lanterns represent students who have felt ignored while passing the abandoned theater.** |
| 2 | What makes Lena pause before she paints beside the old poster, and how does this moment change her thinking? | **She remembers her mother's stories about packed shows and tips that bought Lena a winter coat. She begins to see that the theater's past matters personally to her family.** |
| 3 | How do Lena's mother and Malik disagree about the mural? What does each person value? | **Lena's mother values preserving the theater's history, while Malik values showing the people who live in the neighborhood now.** |
| 4 | How does the author use the photograph and the gold ticket to show Lena's coming-of-age experience? | **The photograph represents the theater's past, and the gold ticket connects that past to Lena's family. Together, they show Lena maturing by finding a way to honor history while still creating something new.** |

## PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The mural project marks Lena's movement from independence toward a more mature understanding of responsibility. Her lantern design shows her wish to make current teenagers visible, while her mother's photograph protects the theater's history. Malik's complaint that the ticket "looks like an advertisement" keeps the conflict from becoming simple agreement. By placing the photograph beside the new mural and changing a lantern into a ticket, the author shows Lena joining past and future rather than choosing one over the other.

Accept answers that identify Lena's shift from favoring a future-focused mural to recognizing the theater's meaningful past. Students should support analysis with specific actions, dialogue, or symbols from the passage.