

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

Grandma Graffiti

(1) Magda Sayeg started a movement, but she didn't march or shout slogans. It started innocently one afternoon at her shop in Houston, Texas. As Magda recalls, it was a slow day. She knitted a cozy, or covering, for the door handle of her shop. People walking by thought the pink and blue cozy was clever. So, she made a leg warmer for a nearby stop sign. Soon, Magda was covering other lampposts and stop signs with her "grandma graffiti." It is called graffiti because it is street art done under the cover of darkness.

(2) Magda didn't learn crafts at her mother's knee. In fact, she grew up with a mother who had never done crafts. But Magda found homemade projects delightful and charming. She learned to knit and crochet. Later, she became a textile artist. Textile artists create art or decorative objects out of plant, animal, or synthetic fibers. They may sew, knit, crochet, weave, or embroider.

(3) Many people think only grandmothers knit and crochet. Magda was in her early 30s when she started covering Houston with her knitting. Her goal was to beautify her city with a new form of street art. She did it with knitting needles. Once she got started, she gathered a crew of knitters—mostly in their 20s and 30s—to help her. They were called "Knitta Please."

(4) Magda's yarn graffiti caught the attention of some companies and city governments around the world. They hired her to complete projects for them in different cities. Now most of Magda's work is commissioned. She rarely does pieces on her own.

(5) Because of Magda, a phone booth in London was wrapped in knitted scarves and patches. A bus in Mexico City was cozied up in a sweater. A hotel in Italy greeted guests with colorful knitted pieces on its balconies. A sporty car was covered in a colorful striped sweater.



Yarn graffiti bench by library volunteers

(6) Pictures of Magda's work were posted online. She inspired yarn artists worldwide. Other people copied her idea. They added bright colors and fancy patterns wherever they saw the need. Soon everything from trees to statues was wearing socks, scarves, and sweaters. And people say Magda is the mother of this craze.

(7) Magda likes to combine bright colors in her pieces that most people wouldn't think of putting together. She also likes to vary her patterns. The fronts of steps on an outdoor set of stairs in Sydney, Australia, have been outfitted with knitted rectangles. The pink, red, turquoise, lime-green, and navy-blue knitted pieces are arranged in a geometric pattern. Posts that block a street to traffic were wrapped in pink sleeves with wide stripes of maroon and orange. A small camping trailer in an art community has been adorned with diagonal and wavy-patterned stripes and squares. Magda was also hired to knit cozies for the trunks of 99 trees in front of a museum in Austin, Texas.



Yarn graffiti at library by volunteers

(8) But not everyone likes the term *yarn graffiti*. One artist, Agata Oleksiak, known as “Olek,” works with yarn. Her work has been exhibited around the world. She covered the “Charging Bull,” a bronze sculpture near Wall Street in New York City, in a pink and purple knitted sweater. Olek gets upset when people refer to her yarn “Charging Bull” as graffiti. She considers herself an artist and her work as art. She thinks of the street as an extension of art galleries. Olek thinks most of the grandma graffiti is just that—graffiti. Unlike Magda, whose street art created the yarn graffiti movement, Olek doesn’t like to be lumped in with street artists. She doesn’t believe that everyone’s work deserves to be on display.

(9) Many people construct their yarn street art under the cover of darkness. By law, it is considered vandalism or littering. Some yarn graffiti artists have been caught. But the police usually laugh instead of issuing a ticket to the offenders. Most grandma graffiti artists photograph or videotape their work. Over time, the yarn ultimately frays from the weather.

(10) So whether it is art or not, the yarn war rages on. In the meantime, the world is becoming a more colorful and fuzzy place, one lamppost at a time.

Choose answers to multiple choice questions. Type responses to questions that ask you to write a response. Be sure to save your work.

1. What does the word *commissioned* mean in Paragraph 4?

- A. sold
- B. paid
- C. hired
- D. guaranteed

Teacher feedback:

Score:

2. What is the meaning of the idiom “learn...at her mother’s knee” in Paragraph 2?

- A. learn something as a young child
- B. learn while sitting on the floor
- C. learning from something that happens to them
- D. learning the right way to do something

Teacher feedback:

Score:

3. Answer the questions about the passage.

(a) Which statements tell the main ideas of “Grandma Graffiti”?

Choose **all** answers that are correct.

- A. Grandma graffiti is considered mischief and is illegal.
- B. Magda’s work has inspired others to create yarn art worldwide.
- C. Yarn graffiti is not considered art by most artists.
- D. Yarn art has brightened public objects with color and pattern.