

Directions: Read the following passage. It will help you understand the tips in this lesson.

A World Made Beautiful by Dzine

by Red Gomez

Carlos Rolon

When Carlos Rolon was a young boy, he told his mother he wanted to be an artist. "She told me to make sure to take some business courses in school," he laughs.

Today, Rolon is known throughout the world as the artist "Dzine." He never took those business courses, but his paintings now sell for thousands of dollars. He travels throughout America and Europe, showing his work in museums and galleries. But life wasn't always like that for this young man from the poor side of town.



It Began with "Bombing" and "Tagging"

Graffiti art began in New York City in the 1970s, when young street artists started painting subway cars, tunnels, building walls, and rooftops. They created a public sensation. They called the art "bombing" a place with their "tag," or their own unique signature. But critics called their work "vandalism."

It wasn't long before graffiti art made its way to Chicago and, in the early 1980s, attracted the attention of 13-year-old Carlos Rolon.

"I started 'bombing' and 'tagging,'" he recalls, "and formed an art collective called Aerosoul. Graffiti art kept me out of [gang] trouble, but also got me into some other trouble."

Today, the art world calls graffiti art "nonpermission works of self-affirmation." This street art, created largely by underprivileged youth, celebrates the achievements and lifestyles of the people it represents.

Offers and Honors

When Rolon graduated from high school, he decided to go straight into the highly paid world of advertising. He took a job with the famous Leo Burnett Agency, but he soon tired of that nine-to-five life. Rolon struck out on his own to become a "legitimate" artist in the competitive museum and gallery world.

Rolon is now known exclusively by his Dzine tag. His works have been shown in Paris, France; Bologna, Italy; Tokyo, Japan; and Birmingham, England. He has had exhibitions throughout the United States and Canada. The

Chicago Museum of Contemporary Art has honored him with a one-man show. He has won grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and has had his work displayed on the World Wide Web. He has even been hired to design a Batman ride for Warner Brothers' Six Flags Great America theme park.

But when Dzine was offered a chance to create a line of hip-hop wear for the NBA, he turned down the offer. "I didn't want . . . my collectors to spend \$2,000 for one of my pieces, then be able to buy my work for \$15 at Kmart," he told a Chicago art magazine.

Remembering His Roots

This is quite a success story for a young man from Chicago's West Side who didn't take his mother's advice to study business in school. But as successful as he's become, Dzine has never strayed from his roots. He still paints wall murals on commission, colorful works that celebrate America's diversity. And one of his favorite activities is talking to school kids about the necessity of getting a good education and finding something productive they love to do.



TIP 1: Get a feel for the author's viewpoint.

An author's viewpoint or perspective about a subject comes through in the tone of the words he or she chooses. You can think of **viewpoint** as being the author's approval or disapproval of a subject. Even though you can't see whether authors are laughing or crying, you can usually figure out how they feel about a subject by looking at the words they use.

For example, an author might say a certain bicycle on sale at a local bike shop is "inexpensive." The tone of this word is positive and probably shows the author thinks the bike is a good buy. If, instead, she says the bike is "cheap," her tone would probably be negative, implying the bike is of poor quality.

1. Go back to the passage and look for words and phrases that tell you how the author feels about Dzine's work. Underline any words that tell you whether the author views Dzine's work as something good, bad or neither.
2. Which of these statements best describes the author's viewpoint of Dzine?
 - A. Dzine is a vandal who paints graffiti on public buildings.
 - B. Dzine is a talented young artist with good business sense.
 - C. Dzine is a creator of the graffiti art movement in Chicago.
 - D. Dzine is a wealthy artist who has forgotten his childhood community.



TIP 2: Summarizing is a good way to understand the author's ideas.

You learned about summarizing in Lesson 2. Look at the different parts of a piece of writing, and see if you can reduce it to a few sentences. Authors have a number of choices to make when they write. You need to figure out why they make the choices they do. This is true in nonfiction as well as in fiction. Nonfiction writers choose words and methods of organization that can help them achieve their purposes.

- **word choice** – Depending on how the author wishes the reader to feel about the subject or the writer, he or she can choose words that sound formal or casual, simple or complex, pleased or annoyed, and so on.
 - **text features** – Authors may use text features such as headings and subheadings to divide a text into sections. They may use sidebars to set information apart and draw attention to it. Charts, tables, and other visual aids can help readers to understand ideas more easily.
 - **organization** – A text can be arranged to serve the author's purpose, such as to compare two subjects or to show cause and effect. An author may list facts and arguments that lead to a conclusion.
3. Which of these is the best summary of "A World Made Beautiful by Dzine"?
 - A. An artist makes people notice art some people don't think is important.
 - B. A boy disagrees with his mother about what he should study in school.
 - C. People spend too much money on art, so it should all be in a museum.
 - D. Graffiti is a waste of time, and graffiti artists should be made to stop.
 4. Which of these best describes the author's word choice in "A World Made Beautiful by Dzine"?
 - A. highly emotional, dramatic words
 - B. casual words used to create humor
 - C. simple, common words used to give information
 - D. frequent use of big, impressive words
 5. How is the passage organized?
 - A. It compares Carlos's work to that other graffiti artists.
 - B. It tells the events of Carlos's life in no specific order.
 - C. It shows how Carlos's childhood caused him to become an artist.
 - D. It is divided by headings into arguments for and against graffiti art.