



Read the passage. Then answer questions 1–10.

Helping Hands

- 1 Maya was finishing up her sketch as her friend Trent gazed over her shoulder, his eyes occasionally squinting at her work. Finally, after what seemed like an eternity, Maya gently set her colored pencil down.
- 2 As part of an art project for their class, Maya and Trent had volunteered to design a mural for the elementary school. For weeks, Maya could think of little else; every time an idea popped into her head, she busily sketched it out. Soon her notebook was bulging with all kinds of images, from bold designs consisting of lines, circles, and squiggles to florals bursting forth in a riot of color.
- 3 Trent also had worked on a number of designs; he often barricaded himself in the library, where he busily scribbled away. Like Maya, he had made a point of sketching any idea when inspiration struck; but instead of keeping his work in a sketchbook, Trent had a habit of cramming his drawings in his pockets or wherever it seemed handy. He once complained that a lot of his work literally was a wash because his mother was constantly pulling his sketches from the washing machine.

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- 4 As Maya waited in anticipation for Trent’s response to her drawing, she nervously played with a bandanna tied around her backpack. She watched as Trent analyzed her sketch, turning it every which way.
- 5 “Maya,” Trent said cautiously, “this is a great design, but I am not sure this is the best we can do.”
- 6 Maya glared at Trent and said, “Alright, what is your brilliant idea?”
- 7 Trent, with a genial look, said, “Maya, don’t misunderstand—I really like what you created. It’s just I think we can do better. Here, let me show you what has been bouncing around in my brain.”
- 8 Trent grabbed his backpack and carefully extracted a rolled-up piece of paper. As he unrolled the paper on top of the desk, he said, “It occurred to me that maybe we don’t need to do the mural ourselves; why not let the students at the elementary school help, too?”
- 9 Maya’s annoyance showed Trent what she thought of that idea.
- 10 “No, really: how about letting all the kids help with the mural?” Trent questioned. “Just look at the sketch—that’s all I ask. If you don’t like the idea, we can go with yours. I promise.”
- 11 Maya reluctantly glanced at the drawing. Trent had sketched out some of the school’s activities: There were students playing instruments in the school band, working in the community garden, and running on the playground. There were even students in an art class, though the teacher looked suspiciously like Trent.
- 12 “Hmm . . .” said Maya. She then noticed that each activity had a continuous border around it—almost like looking at panels of a comic strip. As she peered more closely, she saw that the border was made up of—hands!

- 13 “What is with the hands, Trent?” asked an exasperated Maya.
- 14 “Ah,” said Trent enthusiastically, “not just any hands, but student hands. I thought we could let the students put their handprints on the mural. That way it truly will be a mural created by the school. Everybody—students, teachers, even the cafeteria and maintenance workers—can pitch in! What do you think?”
- 15 Suddenly Maya saw what Trent had envisioned: In her mind she could see small children being helped by the older students as they carefully placed their handprints on the wall. The wall would truly be filled with color and light—and the energy of everyone who helped.
- 16 Maya looked at an expectant Trent and said, “Well, you can count me in!”



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1. This question has two parts. Answer Part A first. Then answer Part B.

Part A Which sentence **best** describes a theme of the passage?

- A Working together can result in great things.
- B It is important to follow through on projects.
- C Art can be used to solve problems.
- D Successful projects require organized ideas.

Part B Which statement from the passage supports the answer to Part A?

- A For weeks, Maya could think of little else; every time an idea popped into her head, she busily sketched it out.
- B . . . Trent had a habit of cramming his drawings in his pockets or wherever it seemed handy.
- C Maya looked at an expectant Trent and said, "Well, you can count me in!"
- D The wall would truly be filled with color and light—and the energy of everyone who helped.

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2. This question has two parts. Answer Part A first. Then answer Part B.
Read this sentence from the passage.

She watched as Trent analyzed her sketch, turning it every which way.

Part A What does analyzed mean as it is used in this sentence?

- A memorized
- B examined
- C admired
- D criticized

Part B Which phrase from the passage helps you understand the meaning of analyzed?

- A can do better
- B waited in anticipation
- C this is a great design
- D turning it every which way



continued

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- 3.** What evidence from the passage supports the idea that Maya cares about what Trent thinks of her mural design?
- A** Maya reluctantly glanced at the drawing.
 - B** Maya’s annoyance showed Trent what she thought of that idea.
 - C** For weeks, Maya could think of little else; every time an idea popped into her head, she busily sketched it out.
 - D** As Maya waited in anticipation for Trent’s response to her drawing, she nervously played with a bandanna tied around her backpack.
- 4.** Decide which statements belong in a summary of the story. Then number them in the correct order.
- Maya reluctantly looked at Trent’s design and listened to his idea.
 - Trent’s sketches of mural designs went through the washing machine.
 - They spent weeks sketching mural ideas, trying to plan the perfect design.
 - Maya and Trent volunteered to design a mural for a wall at the elementary school.
 - Maya noticed that the borders on Trent’s design were made of handprints.
 - Maya agreed to Trent’s plan once she understood it.
 - When Maya showed Trent her design, he said he liked it but they could do better.

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5. Read this sentence from the passage.

Like Maya, he had made a point of sketching any idea when inspiration struck; but instead of keeping his work in a sketchbook, Trent had a habit of cramming his drawings in his pockets or wherever it seemed handy.

Which word means the same as cramming, as it is used in this sentence?

- A scribbling
 - B creating
 - C stuffing
 - D laying
6. How does each character contribute to the story's resolution?
- A Trent excitedly explains the handprint border and Maya finally understands the purpose of his mural.
 - B Maya gets tired of arguing with Trent and agrees to use his mural sketch.
 - C Trent patiently asks Maya questions about her sketch until she realizes her mural will not work.
 - D Trent describes his sketch and Maya realizes he is passionate about his idea.



continued

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7. Based on the information in the story, decide whether each word describes Maya or Trent. Write each word in the correct column. If a word describes both, write it in both columns.

Artistic	Creative	Honest	Organized	Disorganized
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Maya	Trent

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8. What is Maya’s reaction to Trent’s mural idea and how does this reaction affect the plot? Use details from the text to support your answer.

9. Identify the conflict and the theme of the story. How does the conflict help readers understand the theme? Use details from the text to support your answer.



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10. Maya and Trent have different ideas about the mural project. How are their ideas alike? How are they different? Use details from the text to support your answer.

