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Graffiti art or vandalism?

1. Where do you expect to see graffiti? Probably not in a museum. Bristol Museum and Art Gallery, in the south-west of England, was the kind of place you went to see classical statues until the arrival of the 'Banksy versus the Bristol Museum' exhibition in the summer of 2009. The exhibition hosted more than 100 works by Banksy, one of the world's most famous graffiti artists.

Graffiti art or vandalism?

2. Banksy is a man of mystery. He hardly ever gives interviews and likes to be anonymous. Nobody knows much about his life or his background but many people believe that his real name is either Robin Gunningham, Robert Banks or Robin Banks and that he was born in 1973 near Bristol.

Graffiti art or vandalism?

3. Banksy's controversial 'street art' includes spray paintings on live sheep and cows and graffiti on the huge wall erected to divide Israel and Palestine. Brad Pitt spent over \$2 million on a Banksy original. Banksy designed an album cover for the Britpop group Blur in 2003 but he has refused at least four requests to do adverts for Nike.

Graffiti art or vandalism?

4. A year after the Bristol exhibition, Banksy made a film called *Exit Through the Gift Shop*. The film tells the story of a French street artist in America. *Exit Through the Gift Shop* received many positive reviews. Nobody knows if it was about a real artist or an invented character from Banksy's imagination.

Graffiti art or vandalism?

5. Bristol isn't the only place in Britain to welcome graffiti. The DPM Park in Dundee, Scotland has the longest legal graffiti wall (almost 110m long) in the UK. Anyone can paint on this wall any time they like.

Graffiti art or vandalism?

6. Mike Crilley, the graffiti wall project organiser, promotes the positive side of graffiti and runs workshops for local children.

Can we do graffiti where we want these days? Not exactly. It's illegal to paint on somebody else's property so make sure you find a legal graffiti wall like the one in Dundee if you want to have a go.

Tea Time

7. National Tea Day

If you've ever spent time in the UK, you'll surely have had a nice 'cuppa'. There's tea for breakfast, tea during break time, tea when visiting a friend's house, tea to wake up, tea to relax ... you get the idea.

Tea even gets its very own special day in the UK, 21 April.

Tea Time

8. Is the UK the 'capital' of tea?

In short, no. While drinking tea is certainly a centuries-old tradition in the UK, many countries have their own strong cultural practices involving tea. The nation which drinks most tea is Turkey, here people drink an average of ten cups a day! This was followed by Ireland, with the UK coming in third place. Other countries with an obsession with tea include Iran, Russia and Morocco. It is also a popular drink in China and India, where most of the world's tea is grown.

Tea Time

9. What do the British consider to be tea?

Many forms of tea exist around the world. Green tea is popular in China and Japan. In India, tea is often prepared with spices and boiled in both water and milk, and Tibetans commonly drink tea with butter and salt. In the UK, tea is typically a variety of black tea and can be prepared with loose tea or teabags.

It is made with boiling water, allowed to brew for about five minutes and then mixed with a little milk (and possibly some sugar). And thus, the perfect British cuppa is ready!

Tea Time

10. Milk: before or after the tea?

Despite the fact that tea has been popular in the UK for hundreds of years, the question of when to add the milk is one which still provokes arguments! Most people first pour the tea into the cup, then add the milk, but others disagree. It is said that this was a way for the rich to show off their wealth. They often drank tea in porcelain cups, and it was only the better-quality porcelain that could withstand the temperature of very hot tea. This meant that people who had lower-quality cups needed to first pour the milk so that the cup wouldn't break.

Tea Time

11. What is a tea party?

Many cultures have traditions of people meeting to sit together and drink tea. For example, Japanese tea ceremonies can be formal, elegant affairs which last for hours. The most famous British 'tea' stereotype is probably afternoon tea, where people dress formally and meet in hotels or cafés to enjoy tea and cakes, all served on beautiful fine porcelain. Nowadays, going out for a formal afternoon tea is rare, and people will more often simply have a nice cup of tea and some biscuits with friends or family, catching up round the kitchen table.

Tea Time

12. What happens on National Tea Day?

On 21 April, tea parties are held in cafés, pubs, hotels and tea rooms across the UK. Many of these events aim to encourage people to try different varieties of tea and to appreciate how drinking it with others can enrich their lives. Some of these events also promote sustainably produced tea and better prices and working conditions for farmers, while others raise funds for different charities from the sales.

Tea Time

13. What happens on National Tea Day?

However people observe this special day, it's about appreciating the opportunity that sharing a cup of tea gives to people to connect with one another.

Want to know more about tea celebrations this April? Search for #NationalTeaDay on social media. And remember, tea-drinking isn't just for April – it's always the right time for a delicious cuppa.

Vegetarianism

14. World Vegetarian Day

It's estimated that there are 1.5 billion vegetarians on the planet today. Not all of those people are vegetarian by choice. Some don't have access to meat, and for others it's simply too expensive.

But for a lot of people – approximately 75 million worldwide – vegetarianism is a lifestyle choice. These vegetarians often choose a veggie diet for ethical, environmental or health reasons. World Vegetarian Day, which takes place on 1 October every year, promotes and raises awareness of the benefits of a vegetarian lifestyle.

Vegetarianism

15. What exactly is a vegetarian diet?

A vegetarian eats no meat at all, including white meat (like chicken, turkey, etc.) or fish.

Some people follow a semi-vegetarian diet. Other people call themselves 'flexitarian' – they are mainly vegetarian but allow themselves an occasional meat dish. Vegans, on the other hand, don't eat or use any animal products at all – for example they don't eat eggs, cheese or honey.

Vegetarianism

16. Why cut out meat?

Many vegetarians and vegans choose not to eat meat or animal products for ethical and environmental reasons. Often they are unhappy about the bad treatment of animals. Industrial farming for meat, milk and eggs often means that animals don't have enough space to move around, they don't have enough contact with other animals and they never go outdoors.

Vegetarianism

17. Many people are worried about the effects of meat and fish production on the environment. Livestock farming produces more carbon emissions than the emissions from cars, planes, ships and all other transport put together. In addition to this, it uses a huge amount of the planet's land and water resources. Many people see plant-based diets as the only option for the future.

Vegetarianism

18. Is vegetarianism healthier than a meat-based diet?

Some people choose a vegetarian lifestyle to improve their general health. According to the Vegetarian Society, a meat-free diet could help reduce the risk of certain cancers and the possibility of heart disease, as well as other health problems such as obesity and high blood pressure.

Vegetarianism

19. Of course, being vegetarian doesn't simply mean cutting out certain foods from your diet. To ensure that your body gets all the protein, vitamins, etc. that it needs, it's important to replace animal products with a good variety of foods like nuts, tofu, lentils, seeds, grains, cereals and vegetables.

Vegetarianism

20. Teens and vegetarianism

It seems that young people are among the most likely to turn towards a vegetarian diet, and research shows that many more people are likely to become vegetarian in the future. A lot of teenagers decide to try out a veggie diet, and for many this becomes a lifelong choice.

Whether or not you decide to cut out meat completely, or reduce the amount of meat you eat, there are certainly a lot of delicious plant-based meals to try. What's your favourite vegetarian dish?

Kindness

21. World Kindness Day

Can you remember a time when somebody was kind to you? Perhaps a person allowed you to go in front of them in a queue. Maybe your sister phoned you to ask how your week was going. Or perhaps a stranger or a friend helped you in a much deeper way. There are a million ways to offer kindness. And at a time when the world seems to have so many problems, some people have started to take the issue of kindness very seriously indeed!

Kindness

22. Why be kind?

Few people would disagree with the idea that a kind action is good for the soul. It is a win-win situation, leading to a sense of well-being both for the receiver of this kind gesture, as well as for the person who does the action. As a simple example, let's imagine you have a workmate who always does a very good job. How about taking a moment to mention this to them, just in conversation or perhaps by email? The effects of this will probably be quite clear: your workmate will be happy to receive some praise and, in addition, you will probably feel good about yourself for having spread a little joy.

Kindness

23. What are 'random acts of kindness'?

Many organisations try to encourage people to do kind acts, wherever and whenever they can. Perhaps the strongest supporters of this idea are the Random Acts of Kindness (RAK) Foundation, who work with schools and companies to teach people kindness skills. They operate under the beliefs that kindness can be taught and that it is contagious. Their activities range from suggesting kind acts to allowing their website-users to become 'RAKtivists' (people who officially register themselves as activists of kindness).

Kindness

24. How can I be kind?

Apart from using your own common sense, the RAK website suggests some more imaginative ways to show kindness. Generally, these fall into three categories. The first is interpersonal kindness. Some examples are donating old clothes to charity or writing a positive online comment about a restaurant that you like. The second is environmental kindness, which could mean simply recycling or organising a group event to clean a local park or beach. The third category is less obvious: personal kindness, which means treating yourself kindly. Some examples are taking a walk in nature or setting yourself an objective to complain less. The logic is that by being kind to yourself, you will automatically be kinder to the world around you.

Kindness

25. What is World Kindness Day?

This is an annual celebration which takes place on 13 November each year. The day is marked in many countries, drawing attention to the amazing work of organisations and individuals in local communities. How do people celebrate this day? Well, by being kind ... and having lots of fun. One typical event is to use 'kindness cards'. Most experts on kindness agree that it has a sort of ripple effect. This means that one kind action tends to lead to more and more. So don't wait for kindness to find you today, go and start a new ripple!

Teachers

26. World Teachers' Day

Who shapes the person you are the most? Parents or other family members are probably at the top of the list for many people. But a close second place is very likely to go to a teacher. Some of the most influential and successful people in the world have a teacher in their childhood to thank for their success.

Teachers

27. The teachers behind famous people

Can you imagine life without the personal computer? Well, Bill Gates's maths teacher, Fred Wright, asked him to push himself just a little bit harder. Maybe that's why the founder of Microsoft sometimes slept under his desk in the office instead of going home to relax after work. Gates thanked his teacher. And he's not the only one.

Oprah Winfrey, talk show host, actress and TV producer, was inspired by her teacher, Mrs Duncan. Because of her, Oprah says, 'I felt I could take on the world. You did exactly what teachers are supposed to do. They create a spark for learning that lives with you from then on. It's why I have a talk show today.'

Teachers

28. An adult you can trust

For some children, teachers are the only positively influential people in their lives. Antwone Fisher, a best-selling writer, grew up in foster homes, and didn't have many adults that he could trust. But a primary school teacher, Mrs Profitt, was the first adult he ever trusted. 'She spoke to all of us the same way – with respect. No one spoke to me that way before. I think that being with her for three years made all the difference.'

Teachers

29. Celebrate teachers

There are thousands more stories like this, from famous people and ordinary people all across the world. That's why UNESCO celebrates teachers on 5 October every year. UNESCO wants us to remember that education is a basic human right and every child should have free education.

UNESCO hopes to train 69 million new teachers by 2030 so that everyone can go to school, because, sadly, 264 million children in the world today are not in school because there aren't enough teachers. Those children are often in places where life is already very difficult because they live in poor areas or far away from cities and towns, or they are escaping war in their own countries.

Teachers

30. A day to say 'Thank you'

So, if you have a teacher, you're one of the lucky ones. One day, you'll probably look back at your life, your successes, the dreams you've made come true or the difficult things you've survived.

Why not say thank you today on World Teachers' Day?