

Teens painted this mural about Pilsen, their neighborhood.

Words in Action

Content-Area Vocabulary

canvas: heavy cloth on a wooden frame that is used for paintings

mural: a large painting on a wall or ceiling

heritage: the beliefs and customs of a group of people

culture: the way of life of a group of people

tradition: a custom, idea, or belief that is handed down over time

Painting for the People

For years, murals have brightened the streets of Mexico. Now teens are giving these giant wall paintings a new twist.

Daniel Rojas and Jessica Salgado are teen artists with big ideas. And big ideas need big space. When the teens painted together, they didn't use a **canvas**. Instead, they painted on walls! And they didn't even get in trouble.

Daniel, 15, and Jessica, 18, were part of a **mural**-making class in Chicago. A mural is a large painting on a wall or a ceiling.

The class got to choose what to paint in their mural. But first, they learned about the history of murals.

Murals Long Ago

The class learned that murals are important in Mexican history. In fact, some murals found in Mexico are more than 2,000 years old. The students looked at pictures of the ancient murals.

"Seeing the Mexican murals made me proud of my **heritage**," says Daniel. Daniel, Jessica, and many other teens in the class are Mexican-American.

Powerful Art

The students learned that Mexican murals are not just ancient history. In the 1920s, three Mexican artists made murals into a popular style of art.

Diego Rivera, David Alfaro Siqueiros, and José Clemente Orozco painted murals on buildings all over Mexico. Their murals showed events from Mexican history. They also celebrated Mexican **culture**.



Daniel (right), Jessica (left), and another student from the class. Below (from left): David Alfaro Siqueiros, José Clemente Orozco, and Diego Rivera



Many Mexicans saw the murals of Rivera, Siqueiros, and Orozco, and felt proud. The three became known as “Los Tres Grandes,” or “The Three Great Ones.” Their creations led to a mural-making **tradition** in Mexico.

In the 1960s, murals became popular in the United States. Mexican-American artists painted murals about their culture for everyone to see. The murals helped Mexican-Americans take pride in their communities.

Jessica admires what the muralists, or mural-painters, of the past did. She says, “People didn’t have to pay to see their art. They didn’t have to go to a museum.”

A Big Decision

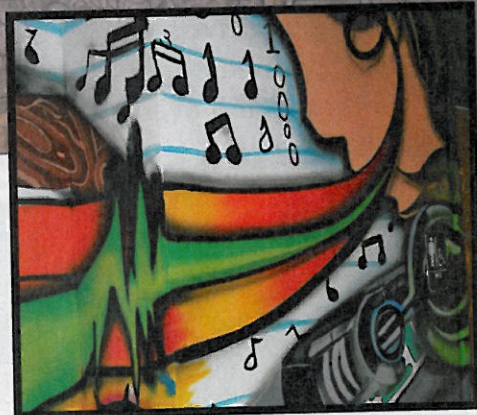
Once the students knew about mural history, they had to decide what to paint for their own mural. They talked about their ideas.

The students found they had something in common—their neighborhood. Most of the students live in an area of Chicago called Pilsen.

The students painted the word “Pilsen” in big letters on the mural. They added scenes from the neighborhood. In one



The mural above by Diego Rivera shows Mexico’s past. Right: The teens’ mural shows that music is a big part of their neighborhood.



picture, a man sells Mexican fruit ices from a cart.

“Everyone agreed to make a mural about ourselves, our heritage, and our lives,” says Jessica. “It is a Mexican neighborhood, so a lot of Mexican culture is in the mural.”

Daniel was happy to paint about Pilsen. “It’s a fun area filled with life. There are always children playing outside, and you can hear

music in the street,” he says.

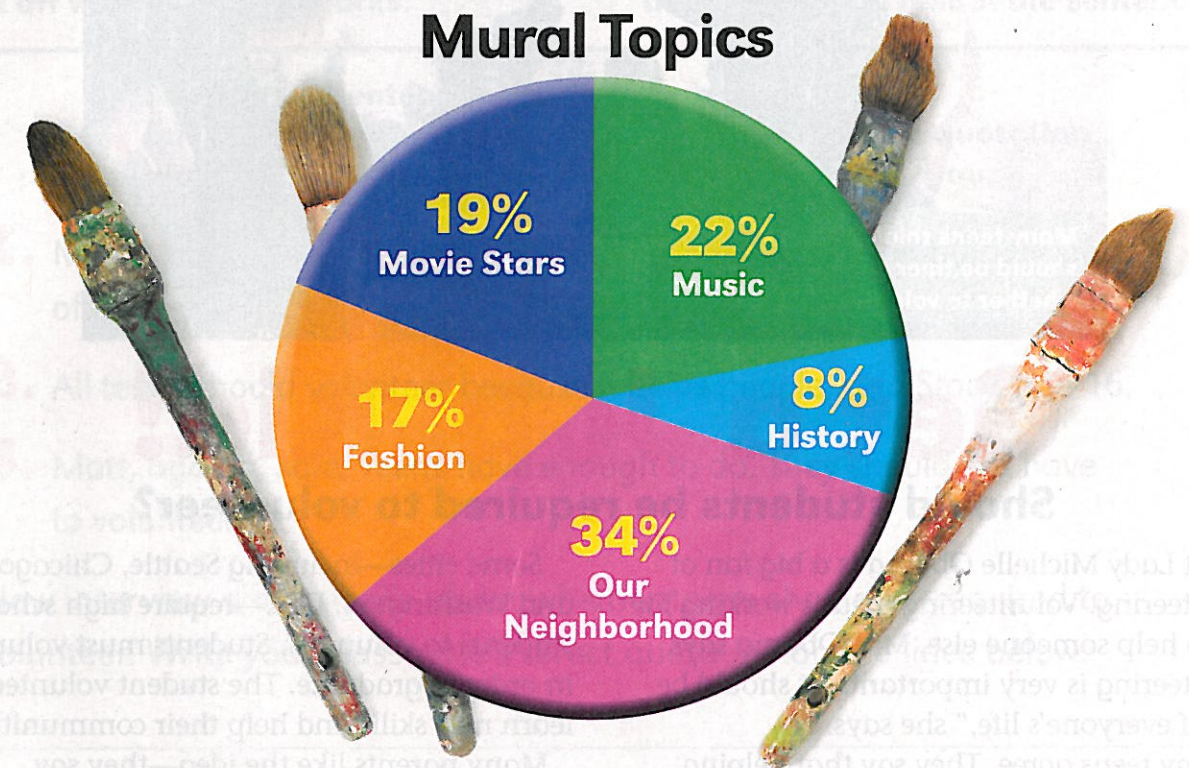
Jessica enjoyed working on the mural. “I like how everyone worked together. It’s a big image, but no one painted it by themselves,” she says. “It’s just really nice how it turned out.”

The finished painting made the whole class proud. The students hope it inspires people—just like murals of the past have done.

—Kimberly Feltes

Read a Pie Chart

Jessica and Daniel made their mural with a group of students. The students suggested topics for the mural. Then they voted on which topic to paint. Look at the pie chart below. It shows the percentage of votes each topic got. Answer the questions about the pie chart.



1. Which topic got the most votes?

- Ⓐ Fashion
- Ⓑ Our Neighborhood
- Ⓒ Music
- Ⓓ History

2. Which topic got the fewest votes?

- Ⓐ Movie Stars
- Ⓑ Music
- Ⓒ History
- Ⓓ Our Neighborhood

3. Which topic could be combined to create a theme with more than 50% of the votes?

- Ⓐ Our Neighborhood and History
- Ⓑ Music and Fashion
- Ⓒ Fashion and Movie Stars
- Ⓓ Our Neighborhood and Music

4. How many topics did the students have to choose from when they voted?

- Ⓐ one
- Ⓑ three
- Ⓒ five
- Ⓓ eight

Answers are in the Teacher’s Edition.