

The Empty Space on the Mural

Name: _____ Date: _____

A blank wall beside the community center’s front steps had become Amara’s favorite place. She had measured it, sketched it, and imagined a mural of enormous blue waves. When the youth art club chose her design as its starting point, she arrived at the next meeting with every section numbered. “If we follow this exactly,” she said, “we can finish before the open house.”

Across the table, Theo unfolded drawings made by younger children who used the center. One showed a chessboard. Another showed a garden. A third showed two friends sharing a book. Theo suggested adding these pictures. Amara glanced at her schedule. The mural was supposed to show movement and water, not a collection of unrelated objects. She put the drawings beside a paint can and continued assigning sections.

The next afternoon, Amara marked the wall while families entered for their programs. A child stopped to ask where the garden picture would go. Amara explained that there was not enough room. The child nodded and went inside. For the first time, the wall seemed less like Amara’s sketchbook and more like the entrance to a place that belonged to many people.

She tried squeezing a chessboard into one corner of her drawing, then erased it. Simply adding objects would not solve the design problem. She asked Theo to stay after the meeting. Together, they studied the curves between the painted waves. Those spaces could become small windows showing life inside the center. The waves would still connect the whole wall.

The revised plan required another work session. Amara explained the change and asked which club members could help. She also invited the younger children to choose colors for their windows. On the evening of the open house, families paused to find familiar activities in the mural. Amara stood beside the last unpainted window. This time she left the space open on purpose, with a small sign asking visitors what they would add.

Read closely. Find the evidence.

1. How does the mural's location influence the plot?

- A. It brings Amara into contact with people whose experiences the mural could represent.
- B. It prevents the club from seeing the finished design.
- C. It requires the mural to contain only waves.
- D. It makes the younger children avoid the center.

2. What does Amara's numbered plan reveal about the conflict?

- A. She does not want to finish the mural.
- B. She has no design ideas.
- C. Her desire for control and a fixed schedule makes her resist other ideas.
- D. She has already invited everyone to redesign the wall.

3. Why is the conversation with the child a turning point?

- A. It makes Amara abandon painting.
- B. It proves that the first design is impossible to paint.
- C. It moves the open house to a different building.
- D. It changes how Amara thinks about who the mural is for.

4. How does the last empty window contribute to the resolution?

- A. It shows the club forgot its deadline.
- B. It shows Amara now welcomes contributions as part of the design.
- C. It proves the waves were removed.
- D. It shows Theo completed the mural alone.

Talk it through: Analyze how Amara's strength as a planner also creates conflict. Explain how the setting and one event help her use that strength differently.