

Never Going To Grow Up, Not Me

Question Sheet

1. When asked the question “what do you want to be when you grow up” what did author Shannon Wall used to answer?

2. What was the real answer? Why did Wall feel she had to lie about it?

3. What did Wall realize while travelling in Paris?

4. How many countries did Wall travel to as a young woman?

5. What does Wall do in her current job at the local YMCA? How does she describe today's high-school students?

6. Wall explains that it took her 25 years to figure out that the question "what do you want to be when you grow up" is problematic. What is the problem Wall has with this question?

7. List 5 things that Wall believes can happen if teenagers don't worry so much about the question "What do you want to be when you grow up?"

8. Explain why/how the image that accompanies the article connects to the ideas Wall discusses in her article.

9. Complete the chart for the article.

| | |
|----------|--|
| Form | |
| Language | |
| Audience | |
| Purpose | |

Compare your answers to suggestions provided.

1. When asked the question “what do you want to be when you grow up” what did author Shannon Wall used to answer?

Suggested answer: She used to say “a lawyer.”

2. What was the real answer? Why did Wall feel she had to lie about it?

Suggested answer:

The real answer was she had no idea what she wanted to be. She felt she had to lie because people expected an answer and she was tired of feeling “like a complete washout” when she said that she didn’t know what she wanted to do.

3. What did Wall realize while travelling in Paris?

Suggested answer:

She realized that she was now in “the real world and that she “was nothing.”

4. How many countries did Wall travel to as a young woman?

Suggested answer:

She says she travelled to 32 countries.

5. What does Wall do in her current job at the local YMCA? How does she describe today's high-school students?

Suggested answer:

Wall works with high school students about to graduate from high school, students who are "struggling with the same issues" that she did. After realizing how unimpressed they are with her "lawyer trick" advice, she sees that they are "more honest" and "more mature" than she was because "they want to be true to themselves" and already understand that "appearances aren't important."

6. Wall explains that it took her 25 years to figure out that the question "what do you want to be when you grow up" is problematic. What is the problem Wall has with this question?

Suggested answer:

Wall's problem is that the question assumes you can only "be something" in the future, once you've grown up. The question ignores the fact that you already "are" something right now, in your present life, and that the "you" you are is made up of every experience you've had up to that point.

7. List 5 things that Wall believes can happen if teenagers don't worry so much about the question "What do you want to be when you grow up?"

Suggested answer:

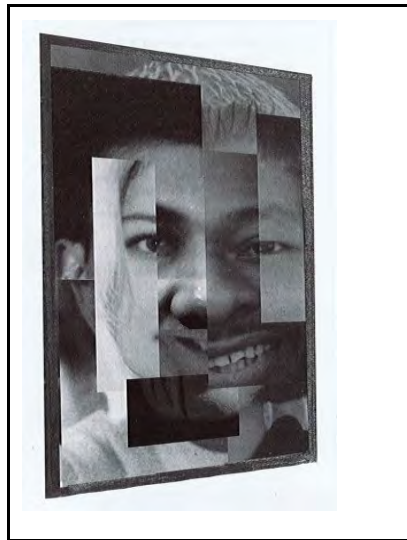
She says 1. Teens can find "peace of mind" and "relax" into their present lives; 2. They can discover their "drives" and what they love; 3. They can realize how full their work lives will be; 4. They can seek out work they love and with luck, make money doing it; 5. They can realize that what they "do" for a living is not all of who they are.

8. Explain why/how the image that accompanies the article connects to the ideas Wall discusses in her article.

Suggested answer:

The image is a mosaic, which is a single image made up of many smaller parts of other images. It's an appropriate image to represent Wall's ideas because the whole article talks about how each one of us, each of our individual identities, is made up of all the

experiences we've already had, and is not simply based on what we think we will be when we "grow up". Wall uses the concept of a mosaic directly: "All the things we do right now -- sports and music and art and even little things like hanging out with friends and reading and thinking -- they are all just pieces of the mosaic each of us calls 'me'". Wall shows the value of our past and present selves, not just our future selves. All of these "pieces" fit together to create our individual personalities and lives. That last bit of advice Wall gives teens is to share their mosaic with the world: "So I told my teens to go ahead and tell us. . . who they are right now." The image of the mosaic is very appropriate because that's what each person is.



9. Complete the chart:

| | |
|----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Form | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• An article for <i>The Globe and Mail</i> newspaper |
| Language | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pretty simple and casual: Wall feels "like a complete washout" and says "people shut up quite quickly" when she lies about wanting to be a lawyer• Speaks "directly" to the reader: "Tell us [adults] what you want to be happy. . ." like a friendly conversation |
| Audience | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teenagers: "Lately, I've been working with a group of teenagers. . ." ;Wall goes over the advice she gives the teens she works with, and by extension to the teens reading the article• Adults: adults can learn from Wall's experience talking to teens about their lives |
| Purpose | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To inform and to persuade teens and adults about a better way to communicate with each other about life goals and careers |