It is thought that Banksy 1. was born (be born) in 1974, in Bristol, England, although no one 2. knows (know) for sure. Banksy 3. is (be) an anonymous British graffiti artist known for his antiauthoritarian art, often done in public places.

Though Banksy 4. has guarded (guard) his identity well, he 5. was (be) noticed as a freehand graffiti artist in 1993. Using stencils since 2000 to enhance his speed, he 6. developed (develop) a distinctive iconography of highly recognizable images, such as rats and policemen, that 7. communicated (communicate) his antiauthoritarian message. With wry wit and stealth, Banksy 8. merged (merge) graffiti art with installation and performance. In the 2003 exhibition “Turf War,” he 9. painted (paint) on the bodies of live pigs. At his “Crude Oils” exhibition in London in 2005, which featured altered replicas of the works of Claude Monet, Vincent van Gogh and Edward Hopper, he 10. released (release) 200 live rats in the gallery. In 2005 Banksy, fully disguised, 11. installed (install) his own works on the walls of major museums in New York City and London, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art and Tate Britain. In 2005 Banksy also 12. painted (paint) a wall on the Palestinian side of the West Bank: on the viewer’s side, children 13. play (play) on a forlorn patch of earth, while through an apparent hole in the wall there 14. is (be) a scene of a perfect tropical beach. Banksy 15. described (describe) himself as a “quality vandal,” challenging the authority of political and art institutions on both the right and the left. In September 2006 his one-weekend Los Angeles warehouse installation “Barely Legal,” for which he 16. decorated (decorate) a live elephant, 17. attracted (attract) large crowds despite a lack of publicity. In Bristol, England, in 2006 he 18. depicted (depict) a naked man clinging to a
windowsill on the side of a public family-planning clinic; local residents 19. voted (vote) to keep the mural. In 2008 Banksy’s “Cans Festival”—a play on the Cannes Film Festival — 20. encouraged (encourage) visitors to add their own art to a south London rail tunnel on which he and 40 international artists had done airbrush paintings. The following year he 21. staged (stage) a surprise show at the City Museum and Art Gallery in Bristol. It 22. featured (feature) animatronics, oil paintings, and an old ice-cream truck.

Banksy’s books—which 23. included (include) Banging Your Head Against a Brick Wall (2001), Existencilism (2002), and Wall and Piece (2005)—24. documented (document) his projects; iconic examples of his work, including a life-size image of two policemen kissing, 25. were (be) featured in the bleak futuristic film Children of Men (2006). Banksy 26. directed (direct) the 2010 film Exit Through the Gift Shop, a documentary that ostensibly 27. profiled (profile) the lives and work of the world’s most talented graffiti artists. Critics 28. were (be) divided on the film, though, as some 29. chose (choose) to accept it at face value while others 30. saw (see) it as a satire, with documentary subject and filmmaker-turned-street artist Thierry Guetta (who, some 31. theorized (theorize), was an actor paid by Banksy or was, perhaps, Banksy himself) serving as a commentator on the commercialization of art.

A commentary on Bansky’s work:

“The Bansky work at the bottom od Park Street 32. is (be) a source of fascination for my 5-year-old son and we 33. pass (pass) it on the way to school and on the way back. He has multiple questions mainly starting with the word ‘why…?’[…] My observation 34. is (be) that public art has the opportunity to provoke a reaction in all of us, regardless of age”.

In September 2015 Banksy 35. debuted (debut) Dismaland, his most elaborate project to date, in Weston-super-
Mare, England. The temporary amusement park and conceptual art show, which included work from other artists, was described by Banksy as “a family attraction that acknowledges inequality and impending catastrophe. The park also hosted late-night parties and concerts by various bands. Dismaland closed in September 2015.

Banksy’s next grand-scale project, the Walled Off Hotel, opened in Bethlehem in 2017. Constructed next to the barrier wall that separates Israel from the Palestinian territories, the hotel sardonically boasts “the worst view of any hotel in the world” and contains rooms decorated with original work by the artist and a gallery exhibiting work by Palestinian artists. That same year Banksy addressed “Brexit,” the scheduled exit of the United Kingdom from the European Union (EU), by painting on the side of a building in Dover the flag of the EU and a laborer poignantly removing one of its stars.

In late 2018 Girl with Balloon (2006), a canvas version of one of Banksy's most popular murals, startled onlookers at an auction when the work seemingly self-destructed by partly shredding just after selling for $1.4 million. As speculation about the meaning of the stunt and about the involvement of the auction house erupted on social media, Banksy posted a video claiming credit for the prank. In 2019 Devolved Parliament (2009), an oil on canvas depicting chimpanzees debating in the British House of Commons, sold for about $12.1 million, while Show Me the Monet (2005), a less-than-idyllic reimagining of Claude Monet’s water lily pond, went for close to $10 million in 2020.

Although he is famous, Banksy has always remained anonymous; his rare interviews are conducted via e-mail or with responses delivered by an altered voice on tape. He remains committed to street art, declaring that life in a city in which graffiti was
legal would be “like a party where everyone was invited.” Nonetheless, the popularity of Banksy’s work has led to numerous unauthorized exhibitions and reproductions. Although artists typically rely on copyright laws to protect their works from such use, copyright requires disclosing the artist’s identity. Banksy instead applied to register his work as a trademark in 2014 and later set up Gross Domestic Product, a temporary shop selling goods inspired by his art. In 2020, the European Union’s intellectual property office threw out the registration application, saying it was made in bad faith.

Banksy wrote:

“I use whatever it takes. Sometimes that just means sweating for days over an intricate drawing. Efficiency is the key”. Banksy has published several books, which include photographs of his works and created a film documentary, Exit Through the Gift Shop, defined as “the first disaster in the world in street art”, which debuted at the Sundance Film Festival in 2010. The film came out in the U.K. on March 5, 2010 and in January 2011 was nominated for an Oscar for best documentary.

In 2014, the 2014 Webby Award granted him the award of Person of the Year.