

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Frida Kahlo

By Anita Venegas



**S**picy salsas, tissue-paper piñatas, and mariachi music playing in the plaza! Mexico's

causing it to shorten. Frida began



## Preview

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Kahlo became one of Mexico's best-known artists. Many of her paintings portray the realities of everyday life. Others include elements of surrealism, such as a skeleton sleeping atop the canopy of the bed where she herself sleeps.

Frida's early life was filled with misfortune. At the age of six, Frida contracted polio. This was a common childhood disease in the early 20th century. The disease weakened Frida and damaged the muscles in her right leg,

this helped pass the time of isolation from other children. Her father encouraged her to swim and play soccer to speed up her recovery. She also began to sketch during the long days at home.

In 1925, Frida was eighteen years old. She was excelling in school and hoped to become a doctor. She was also becoming more interested in how the government worked to bring citizens together through a national identity. The government focused on employment and maintaining a

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

traditional society. Frida often met with other like-minded young people for political discussions regarding their generation and the future of their country.

Traveling home one rainy September afternoon that year, Frida was in a terrible accident. The bus she was on collided with an electric streetcar. Several passengers died.



traveled to the United States, where Diego's work was in high demand. Although Frida had surprised doctors by regaining the ability to walk, she was in chronic pain. By 1933, she had also grown homesick, so they returned to Mexico.

Frida continued to paint even as her health declined. Several people commissioned

A cartoon superhero character with brown hair, wearing a blue suit with a red cape and a shield emblem on the chest. He is flying through the air with a determined expression.

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Frida had several surgeries over the next month. When she was released from the hospital, she began many months of bed rest. To fill the long hours of recovery, Frida painted. She was given an easel that rested on her lap. By 1926, she finished her first major painting, *Self Portrait in a Velvet Dress*.

Frida met another artist, Diego Rivera, in 1928. He admired her work and encouraged her to continue. They married and

in an ambulance and met with visitors from a four-poster bed in the center of the gallery!

Frida's work showed the world that art could be personal—and that art could show pain and suffering, as Frida had experienced. The intentional focus on disability in her work, as well as the vibrant colors and pieces of Mexican culture that she highlighted, set Frida's paintings apart from other artists of the time.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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1. What were Kahlo's earliest forms of art?
  - a. paintings and sculpture
  - b. photography and portraits
  - c. music and sketching
  - d. photography and sketches
2. Explain how negative events in Kahlo's life helped contribute to her interest in the arts. Use specific examples from the text.  
\_\_\_\_\_



*Many of her paintings portray the realities of everyday life. Others include elements of surrealism, such as a skeleton sleeping atop the canopy of the bed where she herself sleeps.*

Based on context, what does it mean to be **surreal**?

- a. better than reality
  - b. marked by unreality; irrational
  - c. frightening and unsettling
  - d. rare or uncommon
5. Many consider Kahlo an icon for disability awareness. Why might this be?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Frida Kahlo



Fill in the missing letters to make a vocabulary word from the article. Then write the full word on the line. Be sure you spell each word correctly.

1. e \_ \_ e \_ \_ i n g

**clue:** doing well

2. i \_ \_ \_ \_ t i o n

**clue:** state of being away from others



## Preview

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6. \_ n \_ \_ n \_ i o \_ a l

**clue:** on purpose

7. \_ u n c \_ \_ \_ e d

**clue:** pierced; went through

8. \_ e n \_ \_ a t i \_ \_

**clue:** group born and alive at the same time

9. c \_ \_ m \_ \_ s i \_ \_ e d

**clue:** officially asked and paid for

10. e \_ h \_ \_ \_ \_ i o n

**clue:** a showing or display

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Frida Kahlo

In the article, you read about the life and works of Frida Kahlo. You learned that her paintings use bold colors and shapes, and sometimes surreal elements.

Paragraph two refers to the painting *The Dream (The Bed)*. Use the internet to look up that or another Kahlo painting. Describe the piece, then explain how it makes you feel. What do you think Kahlo was trying to communicate? Why do you think that? Be sure to identify the painting you chose.

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## ANSWER KEY

# Frida Kahlo

By Anita Venegas



1. What were Kahlo's earliest forms of art?

a. paintings and sculpture      b. photography and portraits



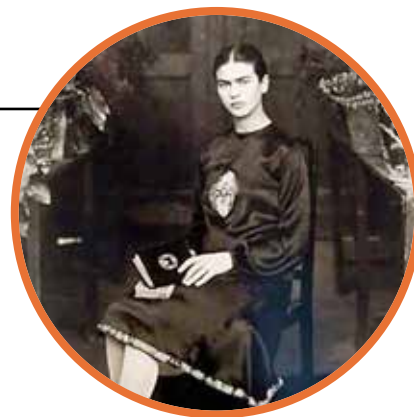
c. lightening and unsewing  
d. rare or uncommon

5. Many consider Kahlo an icon for disability awareness. Why might this be?

**Answers may vary but should acknowledge that she lived with a physical disability and/or chronic pain, which she showcased in her work.**

## ANSWER KEY

# Frida Kahlo



Fill in the missing letters to make a vocabulary word from the article. Then write the full word on the line. Be sure you spell each word correctly.

1. e x c e l l i n g

excelling

**clue:** doing well



**clue:** officially asked and paid for

10. e x h i b i t i o n

exhibition

**clue:** a showing or display