

Frida Kahlo



Frida Kahlo was a famous Mexican artist that lived in the 20th century and was known for her brightly coloured self-portraits in a variety of themes.

Early Life

Frida Kahlo was born on the 6th of July 1907. She lived in Coyoacán: a small village that is now a borough of Mexico City. Her father was a German photographer and her mother was of Spanish and Native American descent.

At six years old, Frida was extremely ill with **polio** and it lasted for nine months. Consequently, Frida's right leg and foot were smaller and weaker when compared to her left.

Education

As a teenager, Frida was able to attend the reputable National Preparatory School in Mexico City. She wished to become a doctor when she grew up so Frida took classes in biology, zoology and anatomy.

At school, Frida became friends with the famous artist, Diego Rivera, who had come to paint a **mural** in the school's lecture hall.

In 1925, Frida was travelling on a wooden bus when it collided with a tram leaving her with many serious injuries and broken bones. While she recovered, Frida's parents set up a special easel and mirror so she could paint in bed and use herself as a model.

Adult Life

In 1928, Frida found Diego Rivera and asked him to comment on her work. He told her that she was talented and that she should continue to paint. The two soon fell in love and were married in August 1929.

For over three years, Diego and Frida travelled all over America as Diego's talents gained him **commissions** and fame. Frida continued painting many self-portraits using bright colours with flowers and animals from her beloved Mexico. She also painted herself with buildings and other structures, depending on the theme of her painting and events in her life.



Self-Portrait with Thorn Necklace and Hummingbird. Photo by Libby Rosof (@flickr.com) is licensed under CC BY 2.0.

Becoming Famous

In New York, Frida became known for her traditional Tehuana dress: a flower headdress, gold jewellery, a loose top and a long, ruffled skirt. It was there that Frida held her first solo **exhibition** in 1938 and sold 12 paintings.

Sadly, Frida's health was always poor. In Mexico in 1953, she arrived at her only solo exhibition in an ambulance and had to sit up in a bed while she spoke with friends, family and guests.

Did You Know...?

In 1939, she became the first Mexican artist to sell a piece of art to the world-renowned Paris museum, the Louvre.



Frida once said, "To paint is the most terrific thing that there is, but to do it well is very difficult. It is necessary . . . to learn the skill very well, to have very strict self-discipline and above all to have love, to feel a great love for painting."



Even today, Frida is respected as a gifted and innovative artist, as well as a determined woman who didn't let her disabilities stop her.

Glossary

commission:	Paid requests for specific pieces of art.
exhibition:	A public display of works of art.
mural:	A painting created on a wall.
polio:	A viral disease that can cause paralysis.

Self-Portrait with Monkeys. Photo by Libby Rosof (@flickr.com) is licensed under CC BY 2.0.

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Frida Kahlo, 1932. Photo by Guillermo Kahlo (@museofridakahlo.org.mx) is licensed under CC BY 4.0.

Questions

1. Number the events from 1-4 to show the order that they happened in.

- ☐ Frida had polio for nine months.
- ☐ Frida was born in Coyoacán, Mexico.
- ☐ Frida met Diego Rivera when he came to paint a mural at her school.
- ☐ Frida attended the National Preparatory School.

2. Which famous museum did Frida Kahlo sell a painting to? Tick one.

- ☐ Louvre
- ☐ Musée d'Orsay
- ☐ Metropolitan Museum of Art
- ☐ Casa Azul

3. Look at the section **Education**.

Find and copy two words that mean the same as 'well-known'.

- _____
- _____

4. How many paintings did Frida sell at her New York exhibition?

5. Fill in the missing words.

In 1925, Frida was travelling on a wooden bus when it _____ with a tram leaving her with many _____ injuries and broken bones.

6. Summarise what you have learnt about Frida Kahlo using 25 words or fewer.

7. As a photographer, do you think Frida's father had any influence on her work?

8. Frida included animals and plants from her Mexican culture in her paintings. If you were going to do the same, what animals and plants would you paint? Explain your answer.

Answers

1. Number the events from 1-4 to show the order that they happened in.

- 2** Frida had polio for nine months.
- 1** Frida was born in Coyoacán, Mexico.
- 4** Frida met Diego Rivera when he came to paint a mural at her school.
- 3** Frida attended the National Preparatory School.

2. Which famous museum did Frida Kahlo sell a painting to? Tick one.

- ☒ **Louvre**
- ☐ Musée d'Orsay
- ☐ Metropolitan Museum of Art
- ☐ Casa Azul

3. Look at the section **Education**.

Find and copy two words that mean the same as 'well-known'.

- **reputable**
- **famous**

4. How many paintings did Frida sell at her New York exhibition?

She sold 12 paintings.

5. Fill in the missing words.

In 1925, Frida was travelling on a wooden bus when it **collided** with a tram leaving her with many **serious** injuries and broken bones.

6. Summarise what you have learnt about Frida Kahlo using 25 words or fewer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: Frida Kahlo was a disabled, 20th century Mexican artist who was known for her brightly coloured self-portraits and she was married to artist Diego Rivera.

7. As a photographer, do you think Frida's father had any influence on her work?

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think that Frida's father would have shown her his photos and explained what might have been good or bad about them. This could have given her an idea of what she might do in her own self-portraits.

8. Frida included animals and plants from her Mexican culture in her paintings. If you were going to do the same, what animals and plants would you paint? Explain your answer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: I would paint roses and oak trees because they are part of my culture and show beauty and strength. I would paint a swan for grace and loyalty and a kingfisher for swiftness and speed.

Frida Kahlo

Well known for her self-portraits, Frida Kahlo was a famous Mexican artist that lived in the 20th century.



Early Life

On the 6th of July 1907, Frida Kahlo was born in Coyoacán: a small village that is now a borough of Mexico City. Her father was a German photographer and her mother was of Spanish and Native American descent.

Stricken with **polio** at age six, Frida was unwell for nine months. Consequently, Frida's right leg and foot were undersized when compared to her left. To improve her health, Frida's father encouraged her to become active and learn a variety of sports.



Education

As a teenager, Frida attended the prestigious National Preparatory School in Mexico City. Frida's dream was to become a doctor so she attended courses in biology, zoology and anatomy.

While at school, Frida became friends with the famous **mural** artist, Diego Rivera, who had come to paint a mural in the school's lecture hall. She would often visit him while he painted to talk about politics and art.

In 1925, Frida was travelling home on a wooden bus when it collided with a tram. During the accident, Frida suffered many severe injuries and broken bones. For over three months, she was first hospitalised, then bedridden and in a full-body cast. To entertain her, Frida's parents set up a special easel that she could use to paint in bed and attached a mirror to the canopy above her so she could be the model for her paintings. Her injuries made it impossible for her to be a doctor but she found a different career through her art.

Self-Portrait with Thorn Necklace and Hummingbird. Photo by Libby Rosof (@flickr.com) is licensed under CC BY 2.0.

Adult Life

Remembering Diego Rivera, Frida found him in 1928 and asked him to give her feedback on her work. Diego was stunned by her talent. He encouraged her and the two soon fell in love. They were married in August 1929.

For over three years, Diego and Frida traveled all over America as Diego's talents gained him **commissions** and fame. Frida continued painting a variety of self-portraits using bright colours with flowers and animals from her beloved Mexico. She also painted herself with buildings and other structures, depending on the theme of her painting and events in her life.



Frida once said, "To paint is the most terrific thing that there is, but to do it well is very difficult. It is necessary . . . to learn the skill very well, to have very strict self-discipline and above all to have love, to feel a great love for painting."

Becoming Famous

In New York, Frida became known for her happy personality and her traditional Tehuana dress: a flower headdress, gold jewellery, a loose top and a long, ruffled skirt. It was there that Frida held her first solo **exhibition** in 1938. She sold 12 paintings and was well on her way to becoming famous on her own. In 1939, she became the first Mexican artist to sell a piece of art to the world-renowned Paris museum, the Louvre.

Sadly, Frida's health was always poor; she consistently had to wear special corsets to support her back and sometimes wore a brace on her right leg to help her walk. In Mexico in 1953, she arrived at her only solo exhibition in an ambulance and had to sit up in a double bed while she spoke with friends, family and guests.

Still admired by many people today, Frida is remembered not only as a talented artist but as someone who didn't let her disabilities stop her.



Glossary

commission:	Paid requests for specific pieces of art.
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mural:	A painting created on a wall.
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Frida Kahlo, 1932. Photo by Guillermo Kahlo (@museofridakahlo.org.mx) is licensed under CC BY 4.0.

Questions

1. Number the events from 1-4 to show the order that they happened in.

- ☐ Frida's parents set up a special easel and mirror to help Frida paint.
- ☐ Frida finds Diego Rivera and asks him to give her feedback on her art.
- ☐ Frida Kahlo was injured when a bus collided with a tram.
- ☐ Frida spent three months in a full-body cast.

2. What type of art was Frida Kahlo known for? Tick one.

- ☐ sculptures
- ☐ self-portraits
- ☐ murals
- ☐ landscapes

3. Look at the section **Early Life**.

Find and copy one word that means the same as 'afflicted'.

4. What did Frida initially want to be when she grew up?

5. Fill in the missing words.

Frida continued painting a variety of _____ using bright colours with flowers and animals from her _____ Mexico.

6. What has inspired you most about Frida Kahlo? Explain your answer.

7. Frida Kahlo painted self-portraits based on events in her life. If you were going to choose an event in your life to paint, what would you choose and why?

8. Frida Kahlo chose bright colours for many of her paintings. What colours would you paint with and why?

9. If you could ask Frida Kahlo one question, what would it be and why?

Answers

1. Number the events from 1-4 to show the order that they happened in.

- 3** Frida's parents set up a special easel and mirror to help Frida paint.
- 4** Frida finds Diego Rivera and asks him to give her feedback on her art.
- 1** Frida Kahlo was injured when a bus collided with a tram.
- 2** Frida spent three months in a full-body cast.

2. What type of art was Frida Kahlo known for? Tick one.

- ☐ sculptures
- ☒ **self-portraits**
- ☐ murals
- ☐ landscapes

3. Look at the section **Early Life**.

Find and copy one word that means the same as 'afflicted'.

stricken

4. What did Frida initially want to be when she grew up?

She wanted to be a doctor.

5. Fill in the missing words.

Frida continued painting a variety of **self-portraits** using bright colours with flowers and animals from her **beloved** Mexico.

6. What has inspired you most about Frida Kahlo? Explain your answer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: I liked how Frida didn't let her injuries stop her from painting, becoming famous or from travelling all around the world.

7. Frida Kahlo painted self-portraits based on events in her life. If you were going to choose an event in your life to paint, what would you choose and why?

Pupils' own responses, such as: I would choose my holiday last year. It was so sunny and we spent a lot of time in the pool. I could use a lot of bright colours and flowers like Frida did.

8. Frida Kahlo chose bright colours for many of her paintings. What colours would you paint with and why?

Pupils' own responses, such as: I would use a lot of yellow for the sun and beaches. I would use different bright blues for the sea and for our swimming pool.

9. If you could ask Frida Kahlo one question, what would it be and why?

Pupils' own responses, such as: I would like to ask her which place she visited most inspired her paintings and changed her point of view.

Frida Kahlo



A famous and innovative Mexican artist, Frida Kahlo is remembered for her self-portraits, bright colours and use of exotic animals in her paintings.

Early Life

Frida Kahlo was born on the 6th July 1907 in Coyoacán: a small village that is now part of Mexico City in Mexico. Her father, Wilhelm (also known as Guillermo), was a German photographer and her mother, Mathilde, was of Spanish and Native American descent.

When Frida was six, she contracted polio (a viral disease that can cause paralysis) and was seriously ill for nine months. During that time, her father taught her the basics of photography, philosophy and nature. As a result of her illness, Frida's right leg and foot were noticeably smaller and thinner than her left. Despite her disability and to improve her health, Frida's father encouraged her to become active and participate in a variety of sports such as swimming, football and wrestling.

Education

When she was 15, Frida was one of the first young women to be enrolled at the prestigious National Preparatory School in Mexico City. Frida wanted to become a doctor so she attended courses in biology, zoology and anatomy. Her knowledge of these subjects would later enable her to add realistic details to her paintings.

During one term, Frida met and struck up a friendship with the famous artist, Diego Rivera, who had come to paint a mural (a painting created on a wall) in the school's lecture hall. She would often visit him while he worked to observe his technique and discuss subjects such as politics and art.

In 1925, Frida was travelling home from school on a wooden bus when it collided with a tram. During the horrific accident, Frida suffered many life-changing, grievous injuries and broken bones. For over three months, she was first hospitalised, then bedridden and in a full-body cast. To pass the time while her body healed, her parents set up a special easel that allowed her to paint in bed. They also attached a mirror to the canopy above her so she could be the studied subject of her paintings. Her dreams of being a doctor were dashed away with the accident but she found a new path in life through her art.

Adult Life

Recalling her friendship with Diego Rivera, Frida sought him out in 1928 and asked him to critique her work. Diego was stunned by her talent and could clearly see she was gifted. He encouraged her to continue painting and the two soon fell in love. They were married in August 1929.

For the first three years of their marriage, Diego and Frida travelled the length and breadth of America as Diego's talents gained him commissions (paid requests for specific pieces of art) and fame. Frida continued painting and began selling a variety of self-portraits using bright colours with flowers and animals from her beloved Mexico. She also painted herself with buildings and other structures, depending on the theme of her painting and events in her life.

Becoming Famous

In New York, the couple met with the elite and Frida became known for her happy personality and her traditional Tehuana dress: a flower headdress, gold jewellery, a loose top and a long, ruffled skirt. It was there, in 1938, that Frida held her first solo exhibition - a public display of works of art - and sold 12 paintings. While in Paris in 1939, she became the first Mexican artist to sell a painting to the world-renowned museum, the Louvre.

Unfortunately, Frida's health never fully recovered; she always wore special corsets to support her spine and often wore a brace on her right leg to help her walk. For her only exhibition in Mexico in 1953, she arrived in an ambulance and had to sit up in a bed while she spoke with guests and friends.

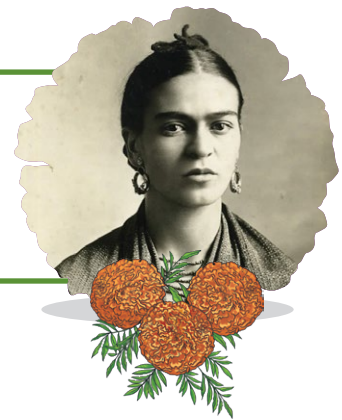


Self-Portrait with Thorn Necklace and Hummingbird. Photo by Libby Rosof (@flickr.com) is licensed under CC BY 2.0.



Frida once said, "To paint is the most terrific thing that there is, but to do it well is very difficult. It is necessary ... to learn the skill very well, to have very strict self-discipline and above all to have love, to feel a great love for painting."

Frida's works are still loved and admired by many people today, as is her strength and perseverance to pursue her art regardless of her disabilities.



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Frida Kahlo, 1932. Photo by Guillermo Kahlo (@museofridakahlo.org.mx) is licensed under CC BY 4.0.

Questions

1. What three subjects did Frida study in school? Tick one.

- ☐ anatomy, zoology and chemistry
- ☐ swimming, wrestling and football
- ☐ politics, art and biology
- ☐ biology, zoology and anatomy

2. Draw **four** lines and match each event to its year.

1953

1939

1929

1938

Frida sold a painting to the Louvre in Paris.

Frida and Diego Rivera were married.

Frida attended her only exhibition in Mexico.

Frida had her first solo exhibition in New York.

3. Look at the first paragraph. Find and copy one word that means the same as 'unusual'.

4. Fill in the missing words.

Her knowledge of these _____ would later enable her to add _____ details to her paintings.

5. Look at the section **Becoming Famous**.

What was the name of the type of dress that Frida became well known for?

6. Frida Kahlo wore traditional clothing rather than modern clothing during her lifetime. Why do you think she did that? Explain your answer.

7. Frida Kahlo travelled all over America and Europe. If you could travel anywhere, where would you go and why?

8. Frida Kahlo's father encouraged her to participate in sports despite her battle with polio. Why do you think he did that?

9. Frida Kahlo specialised in self-portraits. If you were going to paint a picture, would you paint yourself or something else? Explain your answer.

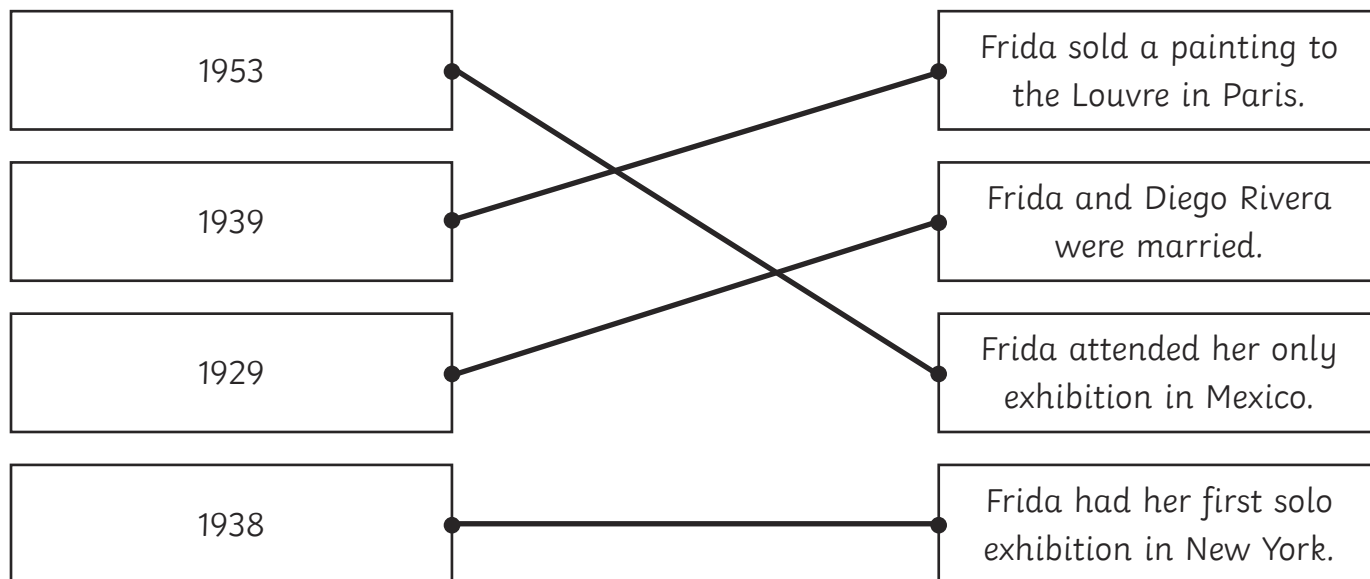
10. Frida Kahlo painted herself with different structures such as a column. If you were going to paint yourself as a structure, what would you paint?

Answers

1. What three subjects did Frida study in school? Tick one.

- ☐ anatomy, zoology and chemistry
- ☐ swimming, wrestling and football
- ☐ politics, art and biology
- ☒ **biology, zoology and anatomy**

2. Draw **four** lines and match each event to its year.



3. Look at the first paragraph. Find and copy one word that means the same as 'unusual'.

innovative

4. Fill in the missing words.

Her knowledge of these **subjects** would later enable her to add **realistic** details to her paintings.

5. Look at the section **Becoming Famous**.

What was the name of the type of dress that Frida became well known for?

She was known for wearing traditional Tehuana dresses.

6. Frida Kahlo wore traditional clothing rather than modern clothing during her lifetime. Why do you think she did that? Explain your answer.
Pupils' own responses, such as: I think she wore traditional clothing to identify her as an artist or someone creative and to help her stand out.
7. Frida Kahlo travelled all over America and Europe. If you could travel anywhere, where would you go and why?
Pupils' own responses, such as: I think I would like to travel to America because it is so big, very different from place to place and there is a lot to see.
8. Frida Kahlo's father encouraged her to participate in sports despite her battle with polio. Why do you think he did that?
Pupils' own responses, such as: I think he did that to help her build strength in her weaker leg and to encourage her to stay active despite her injury.
9. Frida Kahlo specialised in self-portraits. If you were going to paint a picture, would you paint yourself or something else? Explain your answer.
Pupils' own responses, such as: I think I would rather paint landscapes but use bright colours like her. I am not very good at drawing faces.
10. Frida Kahlo painted herself with different structures such as a column. If you were going to paint yourself as a structure, what would you paint?
Pupils' own responses, such as: I think I would like to paint myself as a school, full of knowledge and books that I have read.