

Name _____ Date _____

FRIDA KAHLO

Can you paint a picture of pain? Frida Kahlo was a Mexican painter who spent her life doing just that. She suffered painful accidents and tragedies in her life, and she transformed these sad events into art that has touched people around the world.

Frida Kahlo loved her native country, Mexico. Although she was born on July 6th, 1907, in Coyoacán, later in her life she always claimed she had been born in 1910, the year of the Mexican Revolution. Frida's father was a German who had emigrated to Mexico in 1890. Her mother was a Mexican woman from Oaxaca.

When she was six, Frida contracted polio. As a result, her right leg was thinner and weaker than the left. She hid this by wearing long dresses.

Frida was bright and gifted. In 1922, she was enrolled as one of only 35 girls in an elite Mexican school, the Preparatoria. In 1925, at the age of 18, a bus she was riding on collided with a street car and she was injured so severely that she spent much of the rest of her life in severe pain. She often had to wear body casts or steel corsets, and she spent much time in bed recovering from operations.

Bed is where she began to paint. In 1926, out of boredom, she borrowed some of her father's oil paints and brushes and painted her first work, a self-portrait. She soon decided to give up her studies of medicine and become a painter. She painted 143 paintings in all, 55 of which were self-portraits. Her paintings were very personal, expressing the pain and tragedy in her life with a combination of Mexican and Native American influences. Although her style employs personal symbolism and surrealism, Frida Kahlo herself always thought of herself as a realistic painter.

Frida Kahlo married the famous Mexican painter Diego Rivera in 1929. They had a stormy marriage, and divorced in 1939. They remained close, however, and remarried a year later, in 1940.

For many years, Frida Kahlo was overshadowed by her famous husband. However, she sold many paintings during her life, and after her death her popularity has continued to grow around the world. In 2006, her self-portrait "Raices" ("Roots") was sold at an auction for \$5.6 million dollars, setting a new record for paintings by Latin American artists.

Frida Kahlo died in Mexico City on July 13th, 1954, of pulmonary embolism.

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Answer the questions about *FRIDA KAHLO*

1. When was Frida Kahlo born?
 - a. In 1890
 - b. In 1907
 - c. In 1910
 - d. In 1925

2. What is she famous for?
 - a. She was a gifted child.
 - b. She suffered a serious traffic accident.
 - c. She painted powerful paintings.
 - d. She married Diego Rivera.

3. What was the focus of Frida Kahlo's paintings?
 - a. Mexican children
 - b. her personal pain
 - c. clowns
 - d. sunsets

4. Is Frida Kahlo a popular painter now?
 - a. No, her husband Diego Rivera is more famous.
 - b. Yes, her paintings sell for record prices.
 - c. No, she is largely forgotten.
 - d. Yes, but only in Mexico.

Frida Kahlo suffered much pain and misfortune in her life, and expressed it in her art. Do you think she would have been such a good painter without it? Explain your position.

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Answers to *FRIDA KAHLO*

1. b
2. c
3. b
4. b

answers to the question will vary; accept reasonable answers.