

6th Grade Language Arts Distance Learning Assignment
Week 2

A Note to Parents

This week, your student should read "[Frida Kahlo](https://www.commonlit.org/en/texts/frida-kahlo)" by Jessica McBirney. This text discusses the life and artistic career of the famous Mexican artist, Frida Kahlo. (<https://www.commonlit.org/en/texts/frida-kahlo>)

This text also relates to the themes of Resilience & Success and is also relevant since it is Women’s History Month. Please consider exploring these questions with your child:

"How do we define the roles of men and women?", "How does a person overcome adversity?", and "What makes you who you are?"

Ways to support your child:

- Ask your child about this biography:
 - What was "[Frida Kahlo](https://www.commonlit.org/en/texts/frida-kahlo)" About
 - What did you learn about? About Resilience & Success?
- Watch the following clips with your child at home:
 - '[Frida Kahlo - Self Portrait with Necklace of Thorns](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kcdDLUdX3Kc)' (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kcdDLUdX3Kc>)
 - '[How artists explore identity | Modern Art & Ideas](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NICodKeadp0)' (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NICodKeadp0>)
- Complete the Day 5 activity together to help your child find the appropriate portraits online and brainstorm ways in which to interpret them.

Day 1, Activity 1: Vocabulary in Context

Step 1: Review the vocabulary word, context sentence, picture, and definition.

Step 2: Describe how the context sentence and photograph give hints toward the meaning of the word. Be specific; you must include either specific words from the context sentence or details from the photograph in your answer.

1. **Culture**

American culture has been influenced by the cultures of people from other countries.

Definition: the language, ideas, inventions, and art of a particular group of people

Explanation of Context: _____



1 I learned about Greek culture when I went to the Greek Food Festival.

2. **Confine**

After being confined to the classroom all day, Kisen was excited to go to track practice.

Definition: to keep within limits

Explanation of Context: _____



1 Scientists are looking into the effects of solitary confinement on the brain.

3. Interpret

I interpreted her smile to mean that she agreed with what I said.

Definition: to understand in a particular way

Explanation of Context: _____



2 The interpreter helped the hearing impaired audience members understand the speech.

Day 1, Activity 2: Journal Response

What makes you who you are? Have there been any struggles, setbacks, or failures that have influenced your identity? If so, how?

Day 2: Active Reading

The short biography you are about to read is about Frida Kahlo. As you read, please **annotate** to help you with comprehension as well as answering the following question: What did Kahlo consider important to her identity and her art?

The Basics of Annotating:

- Highlighting a phrase or sentence and including a comment (Does this remind you of something/someone? Do you have an opinion?)
- Circling a confusing word and trying to figure out the meaning
- Posing a question when something isn't fully understood or when you want to know more
- Writing a short summary of an important section

You will be graded using the following rubric.

5 Points	4 Points	3 Points	2 Points	1 Point	0 Points
<u>Ample</u> text annotations throughout text <u>Insightful</u> margin notes with many connections made beyond the text <u>Outstanding</u> effort	<u>Sufficient</u> text annotations throughout text <u>Literal</u> margin notes show understanding of the text <u>Sufficient</u> effort	<u>Some</u> text annotations, mostly in certain parts of the text <u>Some</u> margin notes show confusion <u>Some</u> effort	<u>Few</u> text annotations, not covering full text <u>Confusing</u> margin notes <u>Little</u> effort	<u>Very few</u> annotations <u>Confusing or inaccurate</u> margin notes <u>Very little</u> effort	<u>No</u> annotations, margin notes, or effort

Name: _____ Class: _____

Frida Kahlo

By Jessica McBirney
2017

Frida Kahlo (1907-1954) was a famous Mexican painter, known for painting primarily self-portraits. Kahlo used her art to explore a variety of themes, including gender, class, and race in Mexican society. In this informational text, Jessica McBirney discusses the life and artistic career of Kahlo. As you read, take notes on what Kahlo considered important to her identity and her art.

- [1] Mexican painter Frida Kahlo was born in 1907, but later she told people she was born in 1910. It's not that she wanted to seem younger – 1910 was the year of the Mexican Revolution,¹ and Kahlo wanted to identify herself with Mexican culture and pride. With that goal in mind, she painted self-portraits and other scenes to represent different aspects of Mexican culture and women's experiences in that culture. She would go on to become a popular figure in Mexico and around the world, as a person who stood against the stereotypes² and cultural expectations of her time. Kahlo was a passionate artist who loved her country and valued being true to herself over all else. She did not behave how women were expected to in the early twentieth century and her paintings, many of them self-portraits, were of a style never seen before at that time because she often experimented with the images she produced of herself. Her radical political beliefs³ and exciting lifestyle also set her apart. Her unique personal style – dramatic eyebrows, fancy flowery headdresses, and bright colors – is so recognizable that her portraits still show up on magazine covers and as Halloween costumes today.



"Frida Kahlo, Autoretrato (1926 - 1954)" by Rael Garcia Arnes is licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0.

1. a major armed conflict that lasted from 1910-1920, resulting in the transformation of Mexican culture and government
2. **Stereotype (noun):** a fixed and oversimplified idea about a person belonging to a specific group
3. beliefs that are considered extreme or different from accepted or traditional forms

Early Life

Kahlo grew up at home with her parents in Coyoacán, Mexico, right outside of Mexico City. She described her childhood as “very, very sad,” because her parents had a bad marriage and she was often sick. When she was six years old she contracted polio, a very serious disease affecting muscles and movement. Since the disease left one of her legs smaller and weaker than the other, her father encouraged her to get outside and bike, swim, and play sports, all unusual activities for a little girl at the time. Later she enrolled at National Preparatory School, one of 35 female students at a school of over 2,000 students.

Kahlo fell in love with drawing at an early age. Her father’s friend Fernando Fernandez gave her drawing lessons and even employed her as an engraving apprentice.⁴ He thought she was an extremely talented artist, but Kahlo never considered art as a career. However, at the age of 18 Kahlo was riding a bus when it collided with a streetcar, and she was so badly injured in the ribs, back, and pelvis that she had to spend three months on bed-rest to recover. She spent those long hours painting, mostly self-portraits and some portraits of her friends from school. Though she recovered, she would spend the rest of her life in pain. Because of this, pain was a theme often featured in her work.

Mexican Heritage

After she recovered she started socializing with her friends again and joined the Mexican Communist Party. The political activism the group practiced gave Kahlo greater appreciation for Mexican culture, especially when it came to the role women played within it. She continued painting, and in 1928 she met Diego Rivera, a famous artist and fellow member of the Communist Party. She asked him if her paintings were good enough to make a living on; Rivera was extremely impressed by her unique work. Kahlo and Rivera went on to get married the next year.

- [5] Over the next few years, Kahlo continued to embrace her traditional Mexican heritage. She wore traditional dress (long, colorful dresses, fancy headdresses, and heavy jewelry) and changed her artistic style to reflect traditional Mexican folk art. Kahlo believed that her lifestyle, fashion choices, and art all reflected her feminism⁵ and spirit of Mexican independence.

Passion for Life and Art

Kahlo maintained her style when she and Rivera moved to the United States in 1930. The couple lived in several cities in just a few years, and both enjoyed success in the art world. Kahlo displayed her artwork in galleries and became popular with the American press, who appreciated her strong English and passion for art and her home country. Sadly, Kahlo suffered from more health problems while living in the United States, as she would for the rest of her life. She became homesick and convinced Rivera to move back to Mexico with her.

4. a person who is learning a trade from a skilled employer

5. the advocacy of women’s rights on the ground of the equality of the sexes.

The couple led a unique and varied life back in a rich suburb of Mexico City. They were commissioned⁶ to paint a bridge together; Kahlo painted her half blue and Rivera painted his half pink and white, and the colors met in the middle. The bridge became a symbol and meeting place for artists all over the city. They hosted the famous Russian political refugee Leon Trotsky⁷ in their house for two years. Kahlo met a French art critic⁸ who loved her work and offered to host an art show for her in Paris. Although the show was not as successful as she hoped, she did become the first modern-day Mexican artist featured in the Louvre, Paris' world-famous art museum.

Continual relationship troubles with Rivera and never-ending health issues only pushed Kahlo to paint even more. She produced some of her most famous paintings during the early 1940s, such as *The Two Fridas*, *Self-Portrait with Cropped Hair*, and *The Wounded Table*, and her art was featured in galleries from Mexico City to New York. She also adopted some unique pets, including spider monkeys and parrots. During this same period, she began teaching at an art school in Mexico City, where she encouraged her students to be informal with her and taught them more about traditional Mexican folk art. Kahlo's paintings became so popular around Mexico that she could usually sell a painting before even finishing it, and most group art exhibitions in the country featured at least some of her work.

Death and Legacy

Unfortunately, by 1950, Kahlo's health was so bad she was mostly confined to bed. She lobbied⁹ for political causes as much as she could. Her nurses observed that a combination of medicine and increased alcohol consumption changed her painting style to be much more rushed, colorful, and intense. Her very last drawing was a black angel, which many people see as a foreshadowing¹⁰ of her death in 1954.

- [10] Kahlo's fame only grew after she died. Her family home opened as a museum in 1958, and the feminist movement in the 1970s led to a re-examination of her paintings as feminist icons. Kahlo's paintings are a unique mix of Mexican folk art, realistic portraits and still-life images, as well as gory¹¹ interpretations of history and emotions. She is, today, one of Mexico's most famous artists, and is considered to be a woman who was ahead of her time. Exhibitions of her work have been featured all around the world, films have been made about her life, and her paintings have sold for a lot of money. Her self-portraits are so iconic that, today, some people call her "the mother of the selfie" – so next time you snap a picture of yourself, remember Frida Kahlo and her passionate commitment to culture and art, which she said was "the frankest expression of myself."

"Frida Kahlo" by Jessica McBirney. Copyright © 2017 by CommonLit, Inc. This text is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0.

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6. to appoint or assign to a task
 7. Leon Trotsky was a famous Marxist revolutionary and politician who had to escape Russia.
 8. a person who specializes in analyzing, interpreting and evaluating art
 9. to seek to influence a politician on an issue
 10. a warning of a future event
 11. **Gory (adjective):** violent or bloody
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Day 3, Activity 1: Vocabulary Practice

Step 1: Fill in the blanks using the correct vocabulary word to complete each scenario. *You may have to change the form of the word (ex: go, going, gone).*

Step 2: Explain why the vocabulary word best fits based on context clues provided in the scenario.

For example: Every single day, Bryan wakes up at 5 o'clock in the morning to take a 10-mile jog. Then, he goes to the gym to lift weights. Afterwards, he does 20 laps in the pool. And this is before he goes to practice with the team every afternoon! Bryan is **relentless** about training because **he is extremely dedicated and exercises all of the time.**

Culture Confine Interpret

1. Whenever Sean travels to other countries, he reads about the art and history of the place as well as the beliefs and customs of the people that live in the area. He always wants to act in a way that is acceptable to the people of a specific country.

Sean learns about other _____ because _____

2. The last time I went to the beach, I found a letter in a bottle that had come from the waves. I was disappointed to find that the writing on the letter was so smudged that I couldn't read a single word.

The writing in the letter was difficult to _____ because _____

3. I tried leaving my puppy out of its crate during the day, but it used the bathroom on the living room floor, chewed up all of my mom's shoes, and scratched the door so hard it has gashes. He now spends every day in his crate until I get home from school.

The dog has to be _____ because _____

Day 3, Activity 2: How Characters Change

Step 1: Return to the text to consider the details of Frida Kahlo's life that the author chose to include in this text.

Step 2: Determine which four details you think are most important to consider when thinking of Frida's identity (what she values, the message in her art, how she lives her life).

Step 3: Complete the graphic organizer explaining the details and how they relate to Frida's identity.

Frida Kahlo

Complete the following Text-Dependent Questions for Day 4, Activity 1.

Text-Dependent Questions

Directions: For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

1. PART A: Which of the following best identifies the central idea in the text?
 - A. After Kahlo's accident, she was unable to leave her bed, which allowed her to discover her passion and talent for painting.
 - B. Kahlo's artwork was motivated by the adversity that she faced, the pride that she felt in her heritage, and the struggle for woman's rights.
 - C. Kahlo primarily used her art to assert her political opinions and her desire to create change.
 - D. While Kahlo achieved great success in Mexico, she became much more famous after she passed away.

2. Which two details from the text best support the answer to Part A?
 - A. "She spent those long hours painting, mostly self-portraits and some portraits of her friends from school." (Paragraph 3)
 - B. "The political activism the group practiced gave Kahlo greater appreciation for Mexican culture, especially when it came to the role women played within it." (Paragraph 4)
 - C. "Although the show was not as successful as she hoped, she did become the first modern-day Mexican artist featured in the Louvre, Paris' world-famous art museum." (Paragraph 7)
 - D. "Continual relationship troubles with Rivera and never-ending health issues only pushed Kahlo to paint even more." (Paragraph 8)
 - E. "Exhibitions of her work have been featured all around the world, films have been made about her life, and her paintings have sold for a lot of money." (Paragraph 10)
 - F. "Kahlo's fame only grew after she died." (Paragraph 10)

3. How does describing Kahlo as "the mother of the selfie" in paragraph 10 contribute to the development of ideas in the passage?
 - A. It connects Kahlo's art to present day.
 - B. It proves that Kahlo was ahead of her time.
 - C. It allows readers to better understand her work.
 - D. It encourages readers to think about Kahlo more often.

4. How did Kahlo's worsening health affect her art?
 - A. She was unable to paint as much as she used to because of her health.
 - B. She used darker colors in her paintings because her mood was affected.
 - C. She used painting to help her feel better and she painted with greater passion.
 - D. She painted herself less often because she wasn't confident in her appearance.

6. PART B: Which detail from the text best supports the answer to Part A?
- A. "She had large square teeth; she was shorter than I was, but heavier, with bigger bones and square hands." (Paragraph 35)
 - B. "My arms were covered with bruises. When my mother noticed, I made up a story about tripping on the sidewalk." (Paragraph 36)
 - C. "oh, then I would have punched the Other June with a frisky heart, I would have grabbed her arm at poolside and bitten her like the dog she had made of me." (Paragraph 42)
 - D. "Alaska, I thought. Florida. Arizona. Someplace far away and wonderful, someplace without the Other June." (Paragraph 44)

7. How do paragraphs 38-39 contribute to the development of the story?
- A. They reveal how much June's fear of the Other June affects her daily life.
 - B. They show how June's mother protects her daughter from the Other June's bullying.
 - C. They prove that June is able to put her interactions with the Other June behind her.
 - D. They show how important spending time with her mother is to June.

8. What advice does June's mother give to her early in the story? How does her mother's advice affect how June responds to the Other June throughout the story?

Day 4, Activity 2: Application of Vocabulary

Answer each question in 1-2 complete sentences. Make sure that you use the underlined vocabulary word in your answer.

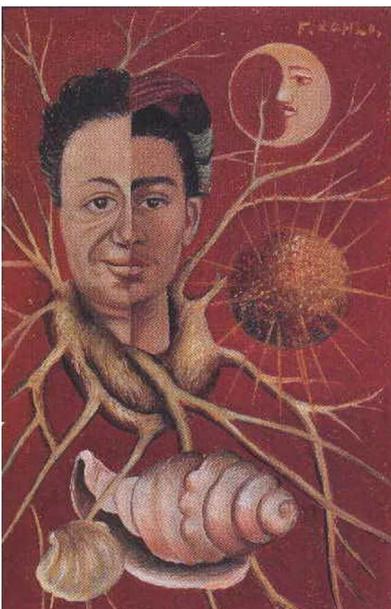
1. Write about a culture you would like to learn more about and discuss why.

2. Frida Kahlo painted when she was confined to a bed due to illness. What creative activity would you do if you were confined to a bed for a long period of time?

3. In what kind of situation would you need to rely on an interpreter?

Day 5: Frida Kahlo, "The Mother of the Selfie"

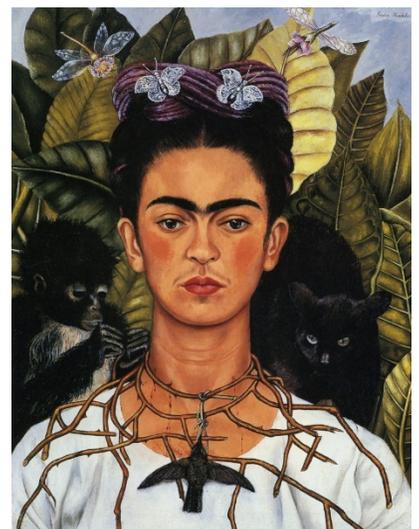
Below are some examples of different self-portraits of Frida Kahlo. You can see more details by searching the portraits' titles online. Choose one that you find the most interesting and write about what you think the portrait says about Frida at the time of the painting (her mood, her life, her wishes/dreams). Use what you know from the article to think of what Frida might have been communicating about herself with that painting.



5 Frida & Diego



3 The Two Fridas



4 Self-Portrait with Necklace of Thorns