

Name _____

Date _____

Frida Kahlo

Use the text to answer each question below.

1. Frida Kahlo was born in Mexico City in 1907, but she claimed 1910 as her birth year. She wanted her birthdate to align with the beginning of the Mexican Revolution. Between 1910 and 1920, economic strain and dissatisfaction with the government sparked armed resistance throughout the country. Several presidents took office over the decade, with disagreements between competing factions leading to more violence. Using their home as a makeshift hospital, Kahlo and her mother took care of those injured in the fighting. This firsthand experience stuck with Kahlo, instilling in her a strong sense of national pride and identity from a young age.

Frida Kahlo was born in 1907 but claimed 1910 as her birth year. Why?

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| A. She was highly superstitious and believed years ending in 0 were more lucky. | B. Her birth records contained this error, and she believed she had been born in 1910. |
| C. She felt a strong sense of national pride having witnessed the Mexican Revolution. | D. She believed appearing slightly younger would make her art seem more impressive. |

2. Mexican folk art and culture influenced Frida Kahlo's personal style, which in turn had a great impact on how she portrayed herself in her paintings. She often wore a Tehuana dress, a multicolored garment from the Indigenous Zapotec people of the region, as well as a flowered headdress and gold jewelry. The intersection between cultures was a common theme in her art. *The Two Fridas* depicts the painter in her famous colorful dress standing beside a mirror image of herself wearing a European wedding dress—a nod to her multiracial ancestry. Kahlo also challenged gender stereotypes in her life and work. She sometimes dressed in suits and other men's clothing and emphasized her unibrow and mustache in her self-portraits.

How did Frida Kahlo use clothing to explore her cultural identity?

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| A. She wore and painted herself exclusively in modern clothes as a way of rejecting oppressive traditions. | B. She wore and painted herself in both Mexican folk outfits and European-style clothes. |
| C. She portrayed herself in clothing associated with the revolutionary political movements of her time. | D. She painted herself in plain clothes that represented the way Indigenous culture had been stripped away by colonization. |

3. Why did Frida Kahlo paint so many self-portraits? Fifty-five of her 143 paintings depict the artist herself, in a variety of outfits, hairstyles, and iconography—visual images or symbols—associated with her heritage. She also took inspiration from contemporary Mexican muralists, who painted large, colorful scenes. Kahlo’s interest in portraying herself began after a bus accident that left her disabled at the age of 18. She practiced her painting while observing herself in a mirror her father brought to her bedside. Kahlo’s self-portraits were intensely personal, yet in touch with a wider cultural identity. Her work was described by some of her contemporaries as Surrealist—depicting alternate realities or dream worlds. Kahlo rejected the label, saying, “I never painted dreams. I painted my own reality.”

What can we infer about Frida Kahlo's artistic intentions based on her rejection of the “surrealist” label?

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| A. She rejected all categorization of her work. | B. She wanted to downplay the connection between her work and the muralists. |
| C. Although often containing herself as a subject, her work was not strictly autobiographical. | D. Despite containing unreal imagery, her work concerned her own physical experiences. |