

**TAKE A LOOK AT WHAT'S  
INSIDE THE GUIDE:****FRIDA KAHLO HISTORY****SPANISH GLOSSARY****CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES**(with Common Core, Missouri GLE,  
and National Core Arts Standards)**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS****RESOURCES FOR EDUCATORS**

# FRIDA LIBRE

## EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

**BOOK BY**  
Karen Zacarías

**MUSIC BY**  
Deborah Lapuma

**SYNOPSIS**

Inspired by the childhood of legendary Mexican painter Frida Kahlo, *Frida Libre* is the uplifting story of young Frida who plans to become a doctor and her new friend Alex who secretly wishes to be a wrestler. Thrown together on a science project about metamorphosis, the two go on a delightful journey in this musical performance that features original songs and explores the meaning of transformation, bravery, understanding and acceptance.

**DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE STAGE AND REALITY**

Dramatic License is when an author or playwright distorts the facts or alters the sequence of events to suit a story for artistic reasons. Here's how *Frida Libre* differs slightly from Frida's real life.

**The Play**

- Frida is the only girl in school.
- Frida and Alex become friends when Alex volunteers to be her partner for a class project.
- Alex sees the bus hit the trolley in the accident.
- Frida refuses to see Alex until he climbs up the tree outside her window.

**Real Life**

- When Frida started at the National Preparatory School there were 34 other girls out of 2,000 students.
- Alejandro Gómez Arias was Frida's high school boyfriend at the time of the accident.
- Frida and Alejandro were on their way home from school when the bus they were riding collided with a streetcar.
- Alejandro refused to see Frida after the accident.

# INTERESTING FACTS

## About Frida Kahlo

- ✓ Frieda comes from the **German word Friede meaning peace**. She dropped the e from her name around 1935 and was known as Frida.
- ✓ She told others her birthday was actually **three years later than it was** to correspond with the Mexican Revolution, which ended dictatorship in Mexico and established a constitutional republic. Though a constitution was drafted in 1917, periodic violence continued into the 1930s.
- ✓ Of her 143 paintings, **55 are self-portraits**. Her self-portrait "Roots" set an auction record for a Latin American piece of art selling for \$5.6 million dollars.
- ✓ Though often defined by art historians as a Mexican Surrealist, Kahlo rejected the label saying, "They thought I was a Surrealist, but I wasn't. I never painted dreams. **I painted my own reality.**"
- ✓ Frida Kahlo was honored with a **U.S. Postage Stamp** on June 21, 2001.

# CULTURAL Context



## LUCHADORES

Lucha Libre is a style of wrestling in Mexico where competitors typically wear colorful masks, or *mascaras*, that have historical relevance and reverence in Mexican folk tales. The wrestlers, or *luchadores*, are almost viewed like superheroes. They have secret identities, storylines and personalities that have been recreated in movies, comic books and action figures.

## WHAT ARE THEY SAYING?

Mexico, where *Frida Libre* takes place, is home to the largest Spanish speaking population in the world. The United States is the second. Here are some words you may hear in the play and their English translations.

<b>Arriba</b>	Go	<b>Maestro</b>	Male Teacher
<b>Bienvenida</b>	Welcome	<b>Malo para la pansa</b>	Bad for your stomach
<b>Bueno</b>	Good	<b>Mi nombre es</b>	My name is
<b>Buenos Noches</b>	Good night	<b>Nada</b>	Nothing
<b>Caballeros</b>	Gentleman	<b>Papi</b>	Daddy
<b>Cucaracha</b>	Cockroach	<b>Que?</b>	What?
<b>Damas</b>	Ladies	<b>Que paso?</b>	What Happened?
<b>Hola</b>	Hello	<b>Señor</b>	Mister
<b>La Casa Azul</b>	The blue house	<b>Si</b>	Yes
<b>Los huesos</b>	The bones	<b>Un poquito</b>	A little bit

Frida Kahlo is born in Mexico as Magdalena Carmen Frieda Kahlo y Calderón July 6, 1907

Frida Kahlo Attends the National Preparatory School 1922

Frida Kahlo starts painting in bed where her mother crafted an easel after her accident. 1926

Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera move to the US 1930 – 1934

Frida Kahlo's First Solo Exhibit Nov. 1-15, 1938

Frida Kahlo Dies July 13, 1954 in Mexico



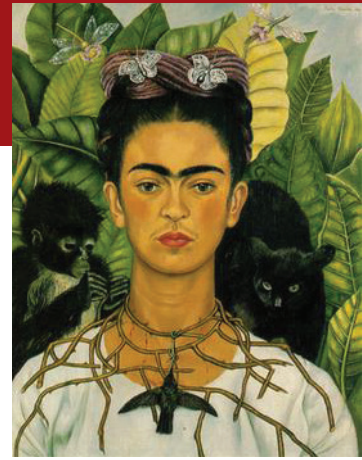
Frida Kahlo is Diagnosed with Polio which left one leg smaller than the other. She hid this by dressing in long skirts. 1913

Frida Kahlo involved in a bus accident September 17, 1925. She underwent 35 operations afterward as a result.

Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera are Married August 21, 1929

Frida Kahlo's First Exhibit in Mexico September 23, 1937. She arrived by ambulance.

Frida Kahlo Starts Keeping a Diary 1944



## COME ON OVER

Alex is the only student that takes time to get to know Frida. Have students take the time to get to know some of their classmates better. Ask students to join you in the center of the room. Split off from the group and say, “Come on over if...” and finish the sentence with a statement that is true about you. If it is true for your students, they stand next to you. If not, they remain where they are. One at a time, have the students step out and say their “Come on over if...” statement. Have them notice who moves and who stays during the activity.

### REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- What surprised you?
- What did you learn about your classmates?

### MISSOURI COMMUNICATION ARTS GRADE LEVEL EXPECTATIONS

- LS1B K-8** Demonstrate listening behaviors  
**LS2A K-8** Share ideas or experiences verbally or using communication systems  
**COMMON CORE STANDARD**  
**SL.3.1** Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions

## LISTENING CIRCLE

Frida and Alex become unexpected friends, simply by taking the time to listen to one another. Organize the group in two concentric circles. The people in the inner circle should be face to face with the people in the outer circle. Give everyone the prompt to tell the story of how they met their best friend. Students will have one minute to respond. Their partners can only listen; they cannot interrupt, comment or ask questions. Switch. The listener now shares their response and the speaker listens. Have one circle move over one partner for further prompts.

### REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- What did it feel like to be listened to for a minute?
- What was it like to talk for a minute?
- How did you know your partner was listening? Or were they?

### MISSOURI COMMUNICATION ARTS GRADE LEVEL EXPECTATIONS

- LS1B K-8** Demonstrate listening behaviors  
**LS2A K-8** Share ideas or experiences verbally or using communication systems  
**COMMON CORE STANDARDS**  
**SL.3.1** Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions  
**SL.4 K-12** Tell a story with descriptive details, speaking clearly at an understandable pace.

## SELF PORTRAIT

Share a few of Frida Kahlo’s self-portraits, and ask what students see. What does Kahlo include in her self-portraits? What seems to be important to her? Why do you think she painted so many self-portraits? Give students paper and art supplies to create a self-portrait. Instruct students to include animals or other items that are important to them. Their portraits can be as realistic or abstract as they want.

### MISSOURI COMMUNICATION ARTS GRADE LEVEL EXPECTATIONS

- R3A-C K-8** Interpret and explain factual information presented graphically  
**COMMON CORE STANDARDS**  
**RL.2.7 K-8** Use information gained from the illustrations and words in a print or digital text to demonstrate understanding of its characters, setting, or plot.

### NATIONAL CORE ARTS STANDARDS

#### ANCHOR STANDARD #6

Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.

#### ANCHOR STANDARD #7

Perceive and analyze artistic work.

## SINGING SCIENCE

Frida and Alex sing a song about los huesos, the bones. In small groups have students write a song about what they’re learning in science. If easier, have the students choose a song they already know the tune to and rewrite the lyrics.

### MISSOURI SCIENCE GRADE LEVEL EXPECTATIONS

- PS1.A.1** Make qualitative observations of the physical properties of objects  
**NATIONAL CORE ARTS STANDARDS**  
**ANCHOR STANDARD #10**  
Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

# RESOURCES for Educators

## WEBSITES

### Frida Kahlo Information and Activity Pack for Teachers from Tate Modern

<http://www.tate.org.uk/download/file/fid/6303>

### The Life and Times of Frida Kahlo Parent's Guide from PBS

[https://www-tc.pbs.org/weta/fridakahlo/guides/parents\\_guide.pdf](https://www-tc.pbs.org/weta/fridakahlo/guides/parents_guide.pdf)

### Brain Pop Educators Frida Kahlo Lesson Ideas

<https://educators.brainpop.com/bp-topic/frida-kahlo/>

### The Art Story Modern Art Insight: Frida Kahlo

<http://www.theartstory.org/artist-kahlo-frida.htm>

<http://maskalucha.com/history-of-lucha-libre.aspx>

<http://www.onlineworldofwrestling.com/information/masks/>

## BOOKS

- *Frida Kahlo and the Bravest Girl in the World* by Laurence Anholt
- *Frida Kahlo and Her Animalitos* by Monica Brown
- *Me, Frida, and the Secret of the Peacock Ring* by Angela Cervantes
- *Frida Kahlo: The Artist Who Painted Herself* by Margaret Fry
- *The Secret Book of Frida Kahlo: a Novel* by F. G. Haghenbeck; translated by Achy Obejas
- *Frida: A Biography of Frida Kahlo* and *Frida Kahlo: The Paintings* by Hayden Herrera
- *Shaking Things Up: 14 Young Women Who Changed the World* by Susan Hood
- *Viva Frida* by Yuyi Morales
- *Me, Frida* by Amy Novesky
- *Frida Kahlo* by Mike Venezia



3311 Washington Ave.  
St. Louis, Missouri 63103  
P: 314.932.7414 F: 314.932.7434

## MISSION

Inspired by the intelligence and emotional wisdom of young people, we create professional theater, foster inclusive community and nurture meaningful learning through the arts.



# DISCUSSION Questions

1. *Frida Libre* is a musical that takes place in Mexico. What does the music tell you about the culture Frida came from?
2. Maestro doubts Frida and Alex will do well on their project. Have you ever had someone doubt your abilities? How did you prove them wrong?
3. At first, no one wants to be Frida's partner because she is the only girl in school. Have you ever been excluded because you were different? What did you do about it?
4. Alex doesn't expect to find a friend in Frida. Why does he change his mind? Have you ever changed your mind about someone?
5. Frida is passionate about science and medicine. What subjects do you enjoy? Why?
6. If you could be a super luchador or an imaginary version of yourself, what would they be like?
7. Alex and Frida talk a lot about their dreams. What dreams do you have for the future? How can you make those dreams reality?
8. Alex and Frida sometimes correct themselves or each other when they think something is "strange," to say that it is "interesting." Why do you think that is?
9. Alex overcomes his fear of climbing trees. Have you ever had to overcome a fear to do something that was important to you? How did you do it?
10. In the play Frida says, "but, a painter doesn't help people," though in real life she went on to do just that. What are you good at that could help people?