

FRIDA KAHLO



NAME

DATE

ACCIDENT AND ARTISTIC BEGINNINGS

Frida Kahlo is today one of the most well-known and iconic artists of the twentieth century. Born to a middle-class Mexican family in 1907, she contracted polio at age 6, which resulted in permanent weakness in one of her legs and taunting from her peers. Frida initially wanted to study medicine, but at age 18, she was riding a bus that collided with a trolley. The accident sent a handrail through her body, fracturing her spine and breaking several other bones. While recovering from her injuries, Frida began to paint on an easel from her bed as a way to express her emotions. This was the start of her artistic career.

PAINTING THE PERSONAL

Frida's paintings differed from those of her artistic contemporaries, including the Surrealists (who found inspiration in dreams) and the Mexican muralists, including Frida's future husband Diego Rivera (who were concerned with political unification in the wake of the Mexican Revolution). By contrast, Frida's works were intensely personal, and she drew inspiration directly from her lived experiences. She portrayed herself in a number of self-portraits that symbolically alluded to her health challenges, including "The Wounded Deer" and "The Broken Column." In "My Grandparents, My Parents, and Me," she depicted her family tree and the faces of her ancestors.

NATIONAL PRIDE AND POLITICS

From La Casa Azul, her family home in Mexico City, Frida worked for two decades, participating in and contributing to the emergence of a new Mexican national identity following the end of the Mexican Revolution. Frida's subjects reflect a mixture of influences and identities, relying on both indigenous and European traditions and spiritualities. Politically active, Frida became a passionate communist and allied herself with the struggles of average working people, such as the two maids she portrayed in her painting "Dos Mujeres."

CHALLENGING CONFORMITY

Because Frida's art depicted scenes from her own life, she often touched upon subjects that were considered controversial and challenged the limits of social acceptability. For example, her painting "Henry Ford Hospital" shows her lying in a hospital bed following a tragic miscarriage. Her personal appearance also broke with convention: she often painted herself wearing the dress of Mexico's native peoples, in men's clothing, or nude, with a visible unibrow and facial hair that defied common beauty standards and expectations of women.

A LASTING LEGACY

Due to poor health, Frida died in 1954 at the young age of 47. However, her life and artistic contributions have left a distinct impression on both generations of artists since and on popular culture. Today, Frida's work is found in major museums, her home has become a pilgrimage site, and her image is found on everything from refrigerator magnets to t-shirts. In a time before social media, Frida created an image of herself that continues to inspire people to embrace their own unique perspectives and identities.

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**DO YOU THINK FRIDA KAHLO
WAS A GOOD WORKER?
WHY OR WHY NOT?**

**FRIDA'S ART PORTRAYED
PERSONALLY
MEANINGFUL SUBJECT
MATTER. IN WHAT WAYS
DO YOU FIND MEANING IN
WHAT YOU DO?**

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JACKIE ROBINSON

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IMPACT ON AND OFF THE FIELD

Baseball Hall of Famer Jackie Robinson is often credited for breaking the MLB color barrier when he signed with the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1947. Robinson is remembered as one of the greatest base stealers of all time and held an impressive .311 career batting average. A passionate civil rights activist, Jackie famously noted, "A life is not important except in the impact it has on other lives."

RISING ABOVE

The Robinson family was led by a single mother and relatively poor. However, challenging life circumstances did not hinder the Robinsons' incredible athleticism. Jackie's older brother Matthew was a silver medalist track star 1936 in the Olympics (the gold clinched by none other than Jesse Owens). Robinson performed as a star varsity athlete in baseball, basketball, track, and football in both high school and college. Robinson left UCLA in 1942, just before receiving his diploma. Thereafter, he played minor league football for a time and did not begin his baseball career in earnest until the age of 28.

STANDING HIS GROUND

Prior to his baseball career, Robinson served as a Lieutenant in the military. It was during this time that Robinson was court martialed after bravely refusing to give up his seat and move to the back of a segregated bus. Robinson was known for standing up to racism. This incident highlights his convictions. Robinson's stellar reputation and many supporters led to an acquittal and honorable discharge.

AN EVOLUTION FOR CHANGE

While Robinson was in talks with Brooklyn Dodgers president Branch Rickey, Rickey asked Robinson if he could ignore the inevitable racist harassment that would follow his participation in the league. Appalled, Robinson confronted Rickey, asking him if he was looking for a player who was "afraid to fight back." Rickey responded that he was "looking for a ballplayer with guts enough not to fight back." Robinson consented to control his impulse to retaliate. Robinson endured years of racist taunts and physicality on the field. Against his inclination to stand his ground, he did not respond directly. However, it can be argued that he fought back with his athleticism, earning the title of Rookie of the Year, and later, MVP.

MAKING A MARK

Robinson also fought back against racism and discrimination with his words and leadership skills. Robinson served on the board of the NCAA until 1967, testified about discrimination before the US Congress, and even publicly confronted the New York Yankees for not signing black players to their organization.

MARIE CURIE



NAME

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SEEKING EDUCATION

Marie grew up in Poland during the 1860s and 70s, a time of general civil unrest as Poland sought independence from Russia. Her father, a science teacher, taught her and her sister at home, and, given that women were not allowed to pursue higher education in Poland at the time, Marie decided to continue her education in Warsaw's "floating university" (secret, informal classes) until she was able to ultimately continue her education in Paris at the age of 24 at the Sorbonne. There, she cleaned university labs to make ends meet, and sometimes rationed food until she "collapsed of weakness." Ultimately, she earned her physics degree in 1893 and, a year later, her mathematics degree.

PERSEVERANCE

Many accounts of Marie Curie's life note that it is surprising that she was able to make such groundbreaking scientific discoveries given the deplorable conditions she was working in. The German chemist, Wilhelm Ostwald, described her laboratory workspace as "a cross between a stable and a potato shed." Despite the difficulty, Marie Curie was able to prevail in making the types of sensitive measurements and analyses needed to discover radioactive elements. Moreover, Marie prevailed in her work despite falling sick time and again from her work with radioactive elements; it is generally agreed that she died from leukemia due to radiation exposure.

SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERIES

Marie Curie is primarily remembered for her scientific discoveries that led to her two Nobel Prizes for the discoveries of radioactivity (1903) and the elements polonium and radium (1911). In fact, Marie Curie's 1903 doctoral thesis on radiation was deemed, by her professors, "the greatest single contribution to science ever written." Today, her discoveries have been important in leading the way for radiation treatments for cancer patients. However, others (such as the recent Radioactive film) have discussed how her discoveries led the way for the development of the nuclear bomb.

OVERCOMING ADVERSITY

Throughout her life, Marie Curie's male colleagues were skeptical of her work and role in the academy. For example, when Marie was to be nominated for the Nobel Prize for her work on radioactivity, her male colleagues argued that the prize should only be split between her co-collaborators Henri Becquerel and Pierre Curie. Eventually, the prize was awarded to all three in 1903, the very first awarded to a woman. She later took over her husband, Pierre's, professorship at the Sorbonne after his death—again the first woman to do so—yet she was still denied entrance to the French Academy of Sciences.

GIVING BACK

Despite groundbreaking discoveries, Marie (and Pierre) Curie never patented their scientific processes surrounding purifying radium, which ultimately meant that other businesses were able to purify their own radium and profit from their sale; indeed, this led to a "radium boom", with prices for radium soaring up to \$100,000. During WWI, Marie Curie developed portable x-ray machines that could be brought onto battlefields, which she nicknamed "Little Curies."

MARIE CURIE



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DO YOU THINK MARIE CURIE WAS A GOOD WORKER? WHY OR WHY NOT?

WHO WAS MARIE CURIE RESPONSIBLE TO? WHO SHOULD SCIENTISTS BE RESPONSIBLE TO?

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JAMES EARL JONES

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FINDING HIS VOICE

James Earl Jones was born into the Great Depression, and spent his earliest years in rural Mississippi. An only child, both parents left him to be raised by his grandparents on their farm. He would later explain that he drew upon painful feelings of abandonment as a resource in his acting. When he moved with his grandparents to Michigan, James developed a severe stutter and went through periods when he didn't speak at all. A teacher recommended he memorize speeches, which helped. His newly strengthened voice would become his most recognizable asset.

FORMAL AND EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION

Initially, James planned to study medicine at the University of Michigan, but acting classes piqued his interest. He graduated with a degree in drama, and almost immediately joined the army for 2 years.

Rather than reenlist, he moved to NYC to continue acting classes. Working as a janitor, he also reconnected with his father. By the end of the 1950s, he had landed his first paid role and began his career with the New York Shakespeare Festival.

WIDE VARIETY OF ROLES

In the 1960s, James acted in a wide variety of roles: with the New York Shakespeare Festival he played the lead in Othello; he appeared on film in Dr. Strangelove; and he had the distinction to be the first African American man to be cast in a long-running role on a daytime soap opera. His ability to move in between stage and screen, and types of roles, would continue throughout his career. Interestingly, the role that received the greatest popular attention was one where only his voice was used, as Darth Vader in three Star Wars films.

AWARDS AND CHOICES

During his extensive career, James' talents were recognized by a series of wide ranging awards: Tony Awards (for theatre), Emmy Awards (for television), and an honorary Academy Award. He has nonetheless been criticized for choosing roles in "lesser" films and television ads. When asked about these choices, he said, "You can't get along doing only stage work." In more recent years, suffering from diabetes, he has taken on the role of spokesperson for diabetes drugs, receiving payment for his efforts.

VOICES AND SILENCES

Of African, Cherokee, Choctaw and Irish descent, James experienced racism throughout his life, and yet he argued that too much focus on "ethnicity" has "blinded me to who I might really be." In the mid 1990s, his autobiography Voices and Silences was published. The title calls attention to James' most well-known asset (his deep, recognizable voice) and points to moments when that voice was silenced.

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DO YOU THINK JAMES EARL JONES IS A GOOD WORKER? WHY OR WHY NOT?

HOW DO CHALLENGES IMPACT US? CAN YOU TALK ABOUT A CHALLENGE YOU'VE FACED?

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