

# Primary Young Masters

*Year 01*

*Month 01*



**Artist of the Month**

[Frida Kahlo](#)

**Book of the Month**

[Frida by Jonah Winter](#)

**Famous Works**

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[Roots](#)

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# Frida Kahlo



*Feet, what do I need you for  
when I have wings to fly?*

— FRIDA KAHLO



## Artist Background

This month, you and your child will delve into the work, life, and practice of Mexican artist Frida Kahlo. Frida Kahlo was well known for her folk art practices and lived and worked in Mexico City, Mexico and San Francisco, USA. She was married to Diego Rivera, another famous Mexican surrealist painter. Frida had many struggles in her life. She had polio as a child and was involved in a terrible car accident at the age of eighteen that left her essentially bedridden for the rest of her life. Despite her struggles, she continued to create. Making art was an important way for her to express herself and her experiences of hardship. Frida Kahlo's work has inspired countless people to find hope in the midst of pain and to seek joy even in times of sadness.



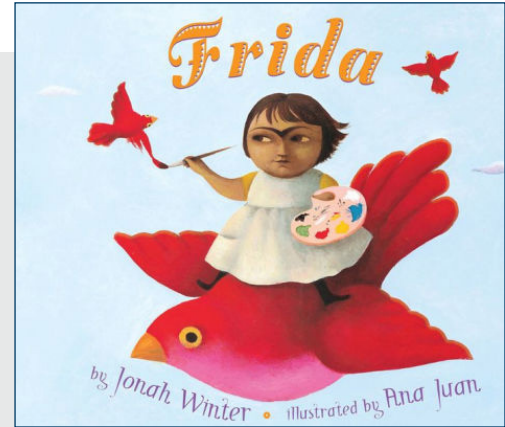
## Element of the Month

**Color**—Color is a way that we describe an object based on how it emits or reflects light. Frida Kahlo had a unique way of engaging with color, and the colors she used in her work often reflected her environment.



# Frida

By Jonah Winter



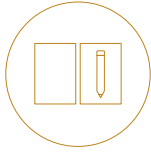
## Book Overview

As playful and lighthearted as it is serious, this book takes an honest and reflective look at Frida's life. It does not gloss over her struggles, but focuses on her determination and the way art helped Frida through difficult times. Winter guides the reader through a discovery of Frida's work, explaining how deeply personal her practice was, and also how the Mexican culture influenced Frida's work.



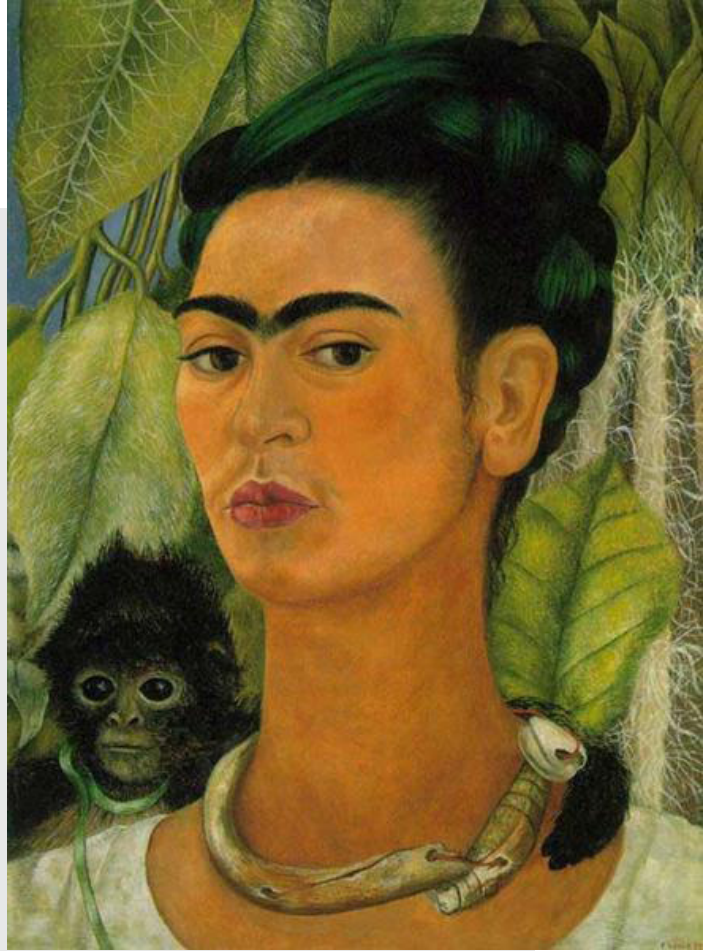
## Journaling

**Drawing in Bed.** Throughout her life, Frida was often in so much pain that she had to paint in her bed. To allow your child to imagine how difficult that must have been like, they will get to draw in bed for this activity. Invite your child to get under their covers, and prop up a few pillows behind them to lean against. Try to arrange it so that your child will lean back some and not just sit straight up, so that it mirrors Frida's experience when sitting was too painful for her. Now give your child their journal and a pencil. Have them maneuver their journal into a position that is as comfortable for them as possible, but also allow them to feel the discomfort of being confined to their bed. For the duration of this activity, try not to let them leave their bed, no matter how antsy they become. Of course, use your judgement with this aspect of the experience. If drawing in bed is relatively easy for them, you may supply them with additional materials, like colored pencils or crayons, to complicate the process. If you cannot set your child up to draw in bed, use some pillows and have them sit



on the floor leaning against a wall or sofa. You can adapt this set up to make it work for whatever situation you happen to be in.

Ask your child to draw something from their heart or imagination, like Frida did. If they are unsure of what to draw, ask them about the people they have been thinking about lately or if any recent events or experiences from their life come to mind that they might like to draw. As they draw, ask them what they think it would be like to have to stay in bed all day—for many days at a time. Would it be difficult or frustrating? Would it be boring after a while? Would they feel like they were missing out on things? Remind your child that Frida used these hard things in her life to create complex and meaningful paintings. She was able to take the discouraging and challenging things and make something beautiful and profound out of them. Discuss that accomplishment and the example it leaves us with today. When they have finished their drawing, ask your child to label the drawing with the title of the book and the date, or do it for them.



*Self Portrait with a Monkey*, 1938, oil on panel



## Discussion Questions: Work 01

What do you think the woman is wearing around her neck?

Why do you think there is a monkey in the painting?

What are some of the main colors in this painting?

Where do you think the woman in the painting is? A garden? A forest?

How do you think the woman in the painting is feeling?



*Roots*, 1943, oil on panel



## Discussion Questions: Work 02

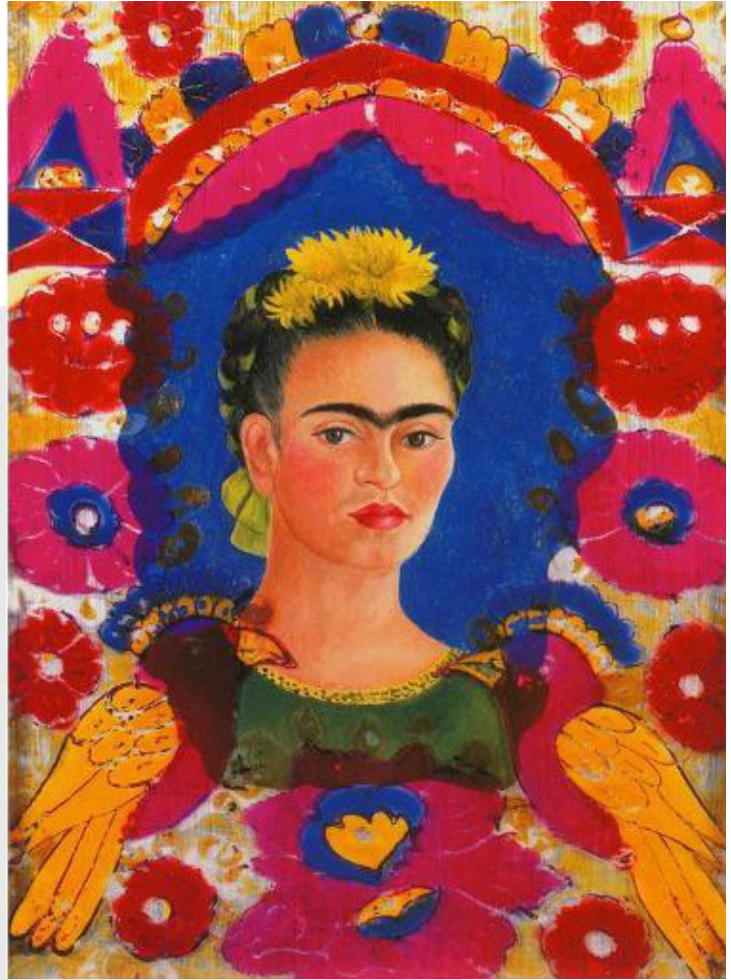
Do you think the woman in the painting is alone? Why or why not?

What is going through and around the woman's body? Why do you think Frida Kahlo painted the roots in that manner?

How do the colors in this painting make it feel different from the last one?

What is your favorite part of this painting?





*The Frame*, 1938, oil on glass



## Discussion Questions: Work 03

Notice the unique border around the woman in the painting. Why do you think Frida Kahlo painted it that way?

What are some colors, shapes, and figures you can spot in the border?

What is your favorite thing about this painting?

How does the blue background behind Frida make you feel?



## Artist-Inspired Projects

**Artist Activity 01—Jungle Self-Portrait.** The first famous work you and your child looked at this month was Frida's *Self-Portrait with a Monkey*. The background of her painting includes beautiful and detailed leaves. Your child will create a similar leaf background using construction paper in a variety of colors.

For this activity, you will need markers, glue, scissors, a printed photo of your child, and green, blue, brown, and white construction paper. Print the photo of your child about 5 x 7 inches. Have your child cut out leaves in a variety of sizes from the green and blue construction paper. If you need to draw some leaf shapes on the paper for them to cut out, that is okay. To make the veins on the leaves, your child can either draw them onto the leaves with markers or a white colored pencil, or they can cut thin strips of veins from the brown or white construction paper and then glue them onto the leaves.

Once all of the leaves are made, have your child glue their leaves onto a piece of white construction paper in a layout that seems both natural and beautiful to them. It may be helpful to go outside and observe some nearby trees if you can. But remember, their idea of natural and beautiful will probably be different than yours. As long as they are thoughtful about it, let them make the arrangement they want. Have your child notice how the leaves are shaped, their varied colors, how they fall, and how they interact with each other. Notice the detail in Frida's painting—how the veins are white and diversely patterned. Encourage your child to emulate that in their own project! When they have completed their leaf background, ask them to cut themselves out from the background in the photo of them that you printed, then ask your child to glue the photo in the middle of the leaves. They now have their own jungle self portrait.

**Artist Activity 02—Painting on Glass.** One of the famous works you and your child have engaged with in this unit, *The Frame*, was painted on glass. Glass is a very interesting platform to paint on—its transparency interacts with paint, light, and texture in delightful ways.

For this activity, collect 3-6 transparencies, white printer paper, masking/painter's tape, tempera paint, a paint palette or tray, and paintbrushes. Attach each transparency to a sheet of paper by taping the transparency along each edge and folding the tape over onto the white paper. It may also be helpful to tape the





transparencies and paper to the surface your child is painting on, to keep their artwork still as they paint. Look at the *The Frame* together, and have your child select one pattern from the border to copy. They might choose a repeated shape, such as circles, semicircles, or one of the flower shapes, or they might prefer an abstract pattern. Have them look closely at this element and begin to paint the pattern on a transparency. Your child should complete 3-6 transparencies, filling each with a different pattern. You can come back to this activity again later if they need a break before completing more. Make sure that each transparency is covered with paint before your child moves on to the next one. These works of art will be used again in the next Artist-Inspired Activity, so make sure to store the transparencies in a safe place!

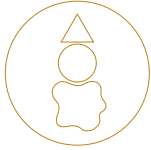
**Artist Activity 03—Stained Glass.** Frida was very interested in light, and outside of her paintings and formal artwork, her home was an extension of her creative mind. Everything she encountered was touched by her infinite creativity. Gather together the painted transparencies from the previous activity, scissors, clear packing tape, and masking/painter's tape.

Take the completed and dried transparencies (from the project inspired by *The Frame*), and have your child cut them into shapes of various sizes. Lay the shapes out on a table and help your child assemble the shapes like a puzzle to make a stained glass window. The shapes can overlap some. Encourage your child to get creative with this! They might like to mix and match the different patterns of their transparencies. When they are happy with their window layout, ask them to tape the shapes together with clear packing tape. Once your child has created their 'stained glass' masterpiece, have them use the painter's tape to attach it to a window that gets good sunlight. Be sure to have them cover as little of the transparencies as possible with painter's tape, as you want the light to come through, creating a stained glass effect. After your child has taped this up, watch the window together at various times of the day. Take note of the light, how it shines through the different colors and shapes, and how it changes in the morning as opposed to the evening.



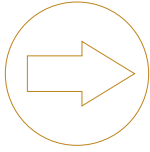
## Exploring the Element

**Element Activity 01—Color Swatch.** To create their color swatches, your child will need markers, white construction paper, a pencil, scissors, and ruler. You can either do the preparation for this project yourself, or have your child help. Choose whichever



will be better for your child. Use the ruler to draw 12 1-inch squares in two long rows down the paper. Look at [the color names chart at the end of this document](#) and use that as your guide for the layout. They will need to write the name of the color (in both English and Spanish) next to the color, so leave ample room and maybe even draw a line for them to write on. When the paper is ready, invite your child to use markers to fully color in each square with a different color from the color list at the end of this document. Ask your child to write the name of each color to the right of the corresponding square in English and Spanish (give them as much help as they need with writing), then have them cut out the squares with their labels in tact. Together, use painter's tape to stick each color swatch to an object in the room of that color, and practice saying the Spanish names for the colors of the objects. Go back a few times during the day, or as long as you are willing to leave the swatches up, and practice the names of the colors in Spanish. Discuss the colors with your child: "Which of these colors is your favorite? Is there one that is more difficult for you to say in Spanish than the others?" Can you and your child weave the Spanish into your use of colors in everyday life?

**Element Activity 02—Frida's Flowers.** The materials you need for this activity are white tissue paper, rubber bands, watercolor paints, small mason jars, paintbrushes, and a plastic tablecloth or tray to protect your work surface. First, have your child separate out one piece of white tissue paper and lay it out flat on the tablecloth or tray. Next, help your child mix a variety of their favorite vibrant colors in the small mason jars. Discuss how to mix and change the colors as you work together. How do they make their pink a bit more purple? What color do they need to drop into the yellow to make orange? Allow your child to practice mixing lots of fun colors. When they are ready to begin the project, instruct your child to brush or drip their mixed watercolors onto their tissue paper to cover the entire sheet, letting some of the different colors mix together to get a "tie-dye" effect. Repeat with several pieces of tissue paper, and set them out to dry completely. Once the paper is dry, help your child gather the tissue in the middle to form a flower, allowing for several inches of the middle to become the "stem." Secure the flower with a rubber band, and repeat with all of the vibrantly colored tissue paper to form a bouquet of flowers. Display the flowers or help your child choose someone to give them to.



## Extension Activities

### **Extension Activity 01—Mexican-Style Vegetable Fried Rice.**

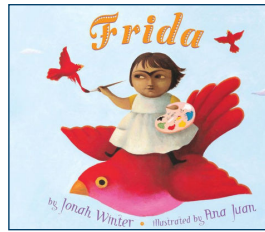
Frida Kahlo loved to host parties and gatherings—she always had a revolving cast of family and guests in her home. Her stepdaughters remember these events fondly. Make this Mexican-style fried rice ([see recipe at the end of this unit](#)) with your child and maybe even invite some friends or family over! You can display some of your child’s artwork from this unit during your party and use the color words in Spanish as you all discuss the art.

### **Extension Activity 02—Drawing Frida's Home.**

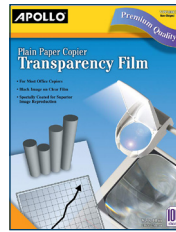
Frida Kahlo’s home, Casa Azul, was her retreat. She had to spend a great deal of time there, since a car accident limited her mobility. [Here](#) is a short video tour of Frida’s home. Enjoy watching it with your child. The blue detail all over Frida’s home made her feel safe and nurtured. It brought life and joy into her world on a daily basis, and it continues to inspire and delight thousands of visitors every year.



# Materials



Frida



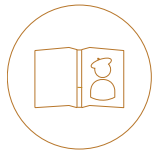
Transparencies, 3-6



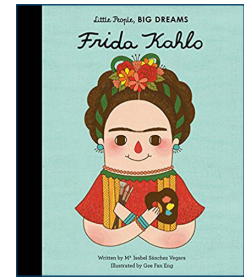
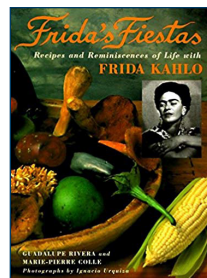
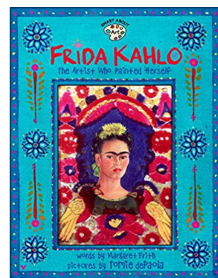
Glass Jars, 4 ounce

Clear Packing Tape  
 Mexican Fried Rice Ingredients  
 and Tools  
 Printed Photo of Your Child  
 Rubber Bands  
 Tissue Paper, white  
 Journal  
 Colored Pencil or Crayons,  
 optional  
 Construction Paper  
 Glue

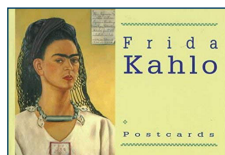
Masking/Painter's Tape  
 Markers  
 Paintbrushes  
 Pencil  
 Printer Paper, white  
 Protective Tablecloth or Tray  
 Ruler  
 Scissors  
 Tempera Paint  
 Watercolor Paint



# Additional Books about the Artist



# Recommended Products



Frida Kahlo Postcard Book



Take a short tour of Frida Kahlo's home



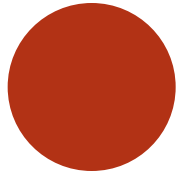
Kaleidoscope



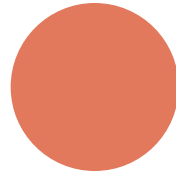
Color-In Stained Glass



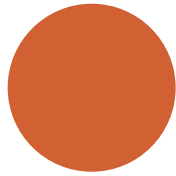
# Spanish Color Vocabulary



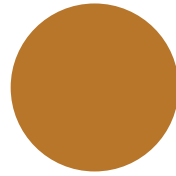
*Rojo*—red



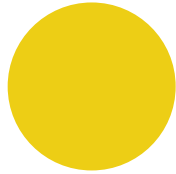
*Rosado*—pink



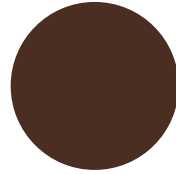
*Anaranjado*—orange



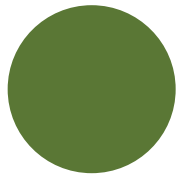
*Dorado*—gold



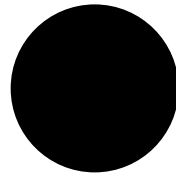
*Amarillo*—yellow



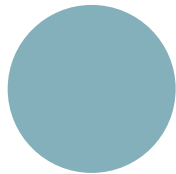
*Marrón*—brown



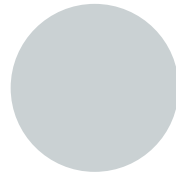
*Verde*—green



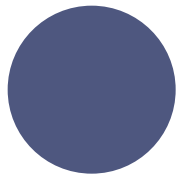
*Negro*—black



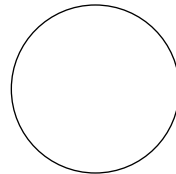
*Azul*—blue



*Gris*—grey



*Púrpura*—purple



*Blanco*—white





# Mexican-Style Vegetable Fried Rice

## INGREDIENTS

6 Cups cooked white rice  
3-5 Green onions or shallots, sliced or chopped  
2 Cloves garlic, chopped or pressed  
1 Leek, halved and sliced thinly  
½ Teaspoon fresh ginger, chopped finely  
Splash of sesame oil  
Splash of rice vinegar  
1 Cup carrots, diced  
1 Bunch of broccoli, chopped  
3 Bell peppers, 1 each orange, red, and green, diced  
1 14 ounce can of corn, drained  
1 14 ounce can of pinto or black beans, drained and rinsed  
½ Teaspoon cayenne powder  
Salt, to taste  
Cilantro for garnish, chopped  
Sour cream

## PROCEDURE

Prepare the white rice according to the instructions on the package so that you have 6 cups of cooked rice.

In a separate skillet, saute and brown the leek, garlic, and green onion or shallot with the sesame oil and rice vinegar. Add the carrots, broccoli, and bell peppers and cook on medium high heat until the vegetables are browned and cooked to your liking. Add the corn and beans and heat through. Add the cayenne powder and salt to taste. When the ingredients are mixed thoroughly, add them to the cooked white rice. Mix well. Serve garnished with cilantro and sour cream. Enjoy with a glass of lemonade!

# Expressions of Gratitude

Thanks to my dear friends Maggie and Betsi, who traveled to Mexico City with me and fell in love with Frida Kahlo. Thanks to my sweet Morro Bay tribe for listening to me talk about Frida Kahlo—and art in general all the time, and listening with supportive and kind ears. Thanks to my wonderful parents, who taught me that art and music and culture and beauty are the fiber of life.

## References

[Draw Frida Kahlo](#)

[Fun for Spanish Teachers](#)

[Self-Portrait with a Monkey](#)

[The Frame](#)

[Roots](#)