Reading 1

Informational Text
Social Studies

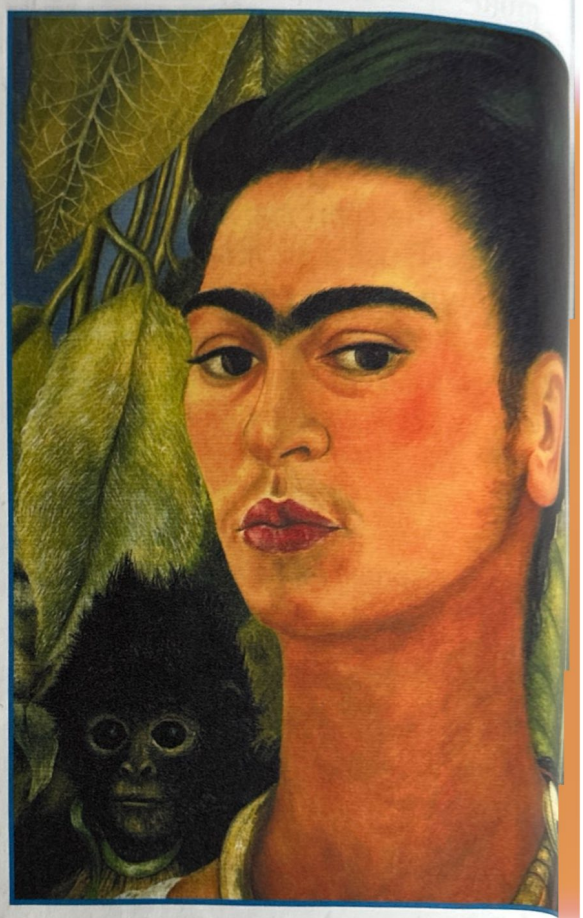
Set a purpose for reading As you read the biographies, think about each person's accomplishments. What do you think makes each person a success?

Success Stories

Frida Kahlo

Born in 1907, the extraordinary painter Frida Kahlo grew up in Coyoacán, an area which is now part of Mexico City. When she was six years old, Kahlo got polio, a serious disease that often causes **paralysis**. As a result of her illness, Kahlo's right leg was always thinner and weaker than her left one. She was also involved in a terrible bus accident when she was in college. Her injuries were so severe she was often hospitalized. It took her many months to recover from this accident. It was during this time that Kahlo began to paint from her bed.

At the age of twenty-one, Kahlo met Diego Rivera, a very famous Mexican painter. They got married in 1929. They shared a love of Mexican art and culture. In some of her self-portraits, Kahlo is wearing traditional Mexican clothing and jewelry. In addition to her many self-portraits, Kahlo painted portraits of friends. She is also famous for her still-life paintings—pictures of arranged objects, such as flowers and fruit.



▲ *Self-Portrait with Monkey*, 1938, by Frida Kahlo

Frida Kahlo **exhibited** her work in New York City, Paris, and Mexico City. She died at the young age of forty-seven. Her house in Mexico City, called Casa Azul (Blue House), is now the Frida Kahlo Museum. Her work and her life story continue to inspire people all over the world.

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paralysis, the loss of the ability to move or feel part of your body
exhibited, showed in public

Bill Gates

As an elementary school student in Seattle, Washington, in the 1960s, Bill Gates excelled in science and mathematics. When he was in eighth grade, his school acquired an early computer. Bill Gates was excused from math class so he could work on a **program** for the computer. Later, he went to Harvard University, where he spent most of his time in the university's computer center.

In 1975, Bill Gates started the Microsoft Corporation. The company developed Windows, the world's most widely used computer operating system. Bill Gates eventually became a multibillionaire and the richest man in the world.

In 2000, Gates and his wife started the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. So far, the foundation has **contributed** $800 million to the United Nations Global Alliance for Vaccine and Immunization, to fight diseases. One disease, malaria, is spread by mosquitoes. Malaria affects about 500 million people every year and kills as many as 3 million people—mostly African children under five years of age. An easy way to prevent malaria is by using bed nets, which cost very little. But very few families can afford them.

Bill Gates has said: "It just **blows my mind** how little money has been spent on malaria research. . . . I just keep asking myself, Do we really not care because it doesn't affect us? . . . I refuse to sit there and say, Okay, next problem, this one doesn't bother me. It does bother me. Very much. And the only way for that to change is to stop malaria. So that is what we are going to have to do."



▲ A mosquito

program, set of instructions
contributed, given; donated
blows my mind, amazes me

▼ Bill and Melinda Gates



Before You Go On

1. What happened to Frida Kahlo when she was in college?
2. What did Bill Gates start in 1975? In 2000?

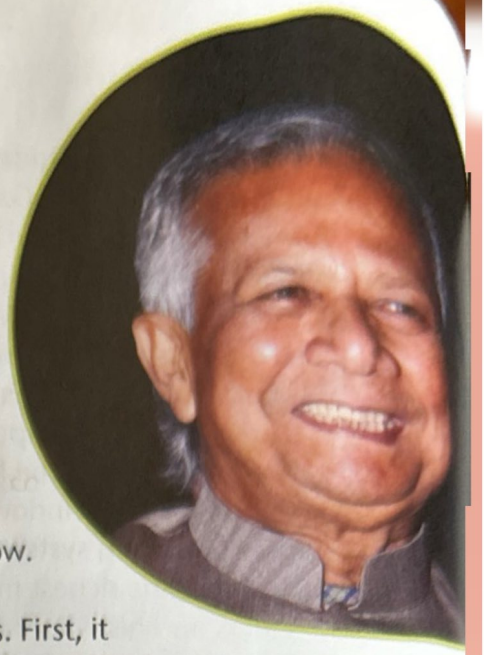
On Your Own

Do you admire Bill Ga Frida Kahlo? Why or not?

Muhammad Yunus

Muhammad Yunus was born in 1940 in a village in Bangladesh. He obtained a scholarship to study in the United States and earned a **doctorate**. He returned to Bangladesh in 1972 to teach **economics**.

In 1974, Bangladesh suffered a terrible famine. Yunus decided that it was not enough to teach economics and read textbooks. He needed to do something **practical**. What if these people were able to receive tiny loans, or microcredit, to improve their situation? Yunus started his project in a small village. He lent $27 to a group of forty-two villagers. They made bamboo stools and bought a cow. And so the Grameen Bank was born.



▲ Muhammad Yunus, banker to the poor

The Grameen Bank was very different from other banks. First, it provided very small loans. Second, it focused on women **borrowers**. Yunus believed that women were better at using and repaying loans. Third, only the very poorest people could obtain loans. The system was based on the trust of the bank and the enterprise of the women borrowers. If the borrowers failed to repay, the bank would fail. But it didn't.

In 2006, Muhammad Yunus and the Grameen Bank were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. The Nobel committee said, "Lasting peace cannot be achieved unless large population groups find ways in which to break out of poverty. Microcredit is one such means . . . ."

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doctorate, university degree of the highest level
economics, the way goods and services are produced and used
practical, relating to actions, not words
borrowers, people who use something and give it back later



Microcredit offers these women new business opportunities. ▶



◀ Mae Jemison, first African-American female astronaut



▲ Jemison in zero gravity

Mae Jemison

Mae Jemison was born in 1956 in Alabama, U.S.A. She grew up in Chicago, Illinois. When she was growing up, Jemison watched spaceflights on television. After college, she went to medical school and also took graduate courses in engineering. What she really wanted, however, was to be a space traveler. In 1987, Dr. Jemison was one of fifteen people, out of almost 2,000 applicants, chosen for NASA's astronaut training program.

On September 12, 1992, Dr. Jemison and six other astronauts went into **orbit** aboard the **space shuttle** *Endeavour*. Dr. Jemison was the first African-American female astronaut. During her seven-day flight, she did experiments to understand the effects of weightlessness. She carried with her several small objects from West African countries. She did this to show her belief that space belongs to all nations.

Dr. Jemison taught community and family medicine for several years at Dartmouth College, New Hampshire. She is active worldwide in science literacy and **sustainable development**. She has founded two companies that are devoted to integrating science, satellite-based telecommunications, and technology into society, as well as an annual international science camp. She is currently leading a project called 100 Year Starship to plan for space travel to another star in the next 100 years.

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orbit, a circular path
space shuttle, space vehicle that can fly into space and return to Earth
sustainable development, development that meets present needs without endangering the needs of people in the future

Before You Go On

1. Why did Muhammad Yunus decide not to teach economics?
2. What did Mae Jemis do after college? Wh did she really want do?

On Your Own

Which of these fou stories was the most interesting you? Why?

Read