

HOMEWORK

INTERMEDIATE - DAY 29

Reading & Writing:

a Have you ever visited the house where a famous person was born or lived? Where was it? What do you especially remember about it?

b Read the article about Casa Azul. Which part of the house are these things connected to? Why are they mentioned?

two giant statues

Leon Trotsky

a yellow floor

a monkey and a parrot

a pair of shoes

a cupboard with a glass door

July 7 1910

1929–1954

c Match the **highlighted** words with their meaning.

1 _____ a piece of furniture with cupboards at the bottom and shelves above, to hold cups and plates, etc.

2 _____ material which you can see through

3 _____ the door, gate, or opening where you go into a place

4 _____ a room where paintings are hung

5 _____ the floor above where you are

6 _____ with a lot of fresh air inside

7 _____ wooden or metal covers which are fixed outside windows

8 _____ an area, usually behind a house, where people can sit and eat outside

d What did you find out about Frida Kahlo and her life? Would you like to visit her house?

Houses you'll never forget

Casa Azul (The Blue House)



On the corner of Londres and Allende Street in Coyoacán, an old residential area of Mexico City, there is a house with bright blue walls, tall windows and green shutters, surrounded by trees. It is one of the most extraordinary places in Mexico, the home of the surrealist painter Frida Kahlo, who died in 1954, aged only 47.

The entrance is guarded by two giant statues nearly seven metres tall. As you walk past them, you enter a garden with tropical plants and fountains. When you go inside the house the first room is the spacious and airy living room. Here Frida and her husband, the painter Diego Rivera, entertained their famous friends, including the millionaire Nelson Rockefeller, the composer George Gershwin, and the political leader Leon Trotsky. Now the room is a gallery where some of Frida's paintings can be seen.

The first thing you notice when you go into the kitchen is the floor – painted bright yellow to stop insects from coming in. There is a long yellow table where Frida and Diego often had lunch parties, and a yellow dresser holding traditional green and brown Mexican dishes. Here, their guests often found themselves in the company of Frida's pets, Fulang Chang, a beloved monkey, or Bonito the parrot, who used to perform tricks at the table in return for butter!

Everywhere in the house you can feel the spirit of Frida and Diego. Upstairs Frida's palette and brushes are still on the worktable in her studio, as if she had just put them down. In Diego's bedroom you can see his stetson hat and a huge pair of shoes – he had enormous feet. In another bedroom there is a cupboard with a glass door, which contains one of the colourful Mexican dresses which Frida loved wearing.

Above the cupboard, in Spanish, are painted these words: 'Frida Kahlo was born here on July 7 1910'. In fact, she was born three years earlier (July 6th 1907) but she changed her birth date to the year of the Mexican Revolution. On the walls of the patio is another inscription 'Frida and Diego lived in this house from 1929–1954'. Again, this is not entirely true. She and her husband lived in separate houses for five years during that period, and they divorced in 1939, though they remarried a year later. The house, like Frida's life, is full of contradictions.

