

Biography

Judy Baca

by Anna Harris



Mc
Graw
Hill

PAIRED
READ

Vibrant Los Angeles

STRATEGIES & SKILLS

Comprehension

Strategy: Ask and
Answer Questions

Skill: Sequence

Vocabulary Strategy

Compound Words

Vocabulary

admired, classmates,
community, contributed,
practice, pronounce,
scared, tumble

Content Standards

Social Studies

Culture and Diversity

Word count: 752**

Photography Credit: Cover "Judith F. Baca at the Great Wall of Los Angeles" 2005. Courtesy of SPARC (www.sparcmurals.org).

**The total word count is based on words in the running text and headings only. Numerals and words in captions, labels, diagrams, charts, and sidebars are not included.



Essential Question

How do people from different cultures contribute to a community?

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CHAPTER 1

Young Judy Baca

Do you think “real” art hangs in museums? Think again! Some people make artworks on outdoor walls. The artworks are called **murals**.

Judy Baca is an American mural artist. She was born in 1946. Her family is from Mexico. When she was young, Judy lived in Los Angeles with her mother and her grandmother.

A mural is a piece of art painted on a wall.





When Judy was six, her life changed. She and her mother moved across Los Angeles. Judy had always talked in Spanish. In the new neighborhood, she wasn't allowed to speak Spanish at school. She did not have many Mexican American classmates.

At first, Judy found it hard to pronounce English words. Her teacher let her paint and draw when she couldn't understand the lessons. Judy started to love art. Later, she went to college and studied art.

After college, Judy worked for the city of Los Angeles. She taught art in a neighborhood called Boyle Heights. Different groups of teenagers hung out there. The groups did not get along. Judy decided to paint a mural. She asked 20 of the teens to help her. She wanted them to work together. She helped them put aside their differences.

Some people in the community tried to stop Judy's work, but she didn't give up. When the mural was done, people loved it. It became a symbol of **unity**. The mural showed a Mexican American grandmother with open arms. She looked as if she was offering a hug.



The mural was called *Mi Abuelita*, which means "My Grandmother."

The success of *Mi Abuelita* helped Judy start a citywide program. She got people to paint murals all over Los Angeles. Later, Judy wanted the program to have more freedom. So in 1976, she started another group. It is called the Social and Public Art Resource Center, or SPARC. It makes art for people of all different backgrounds and cultures.

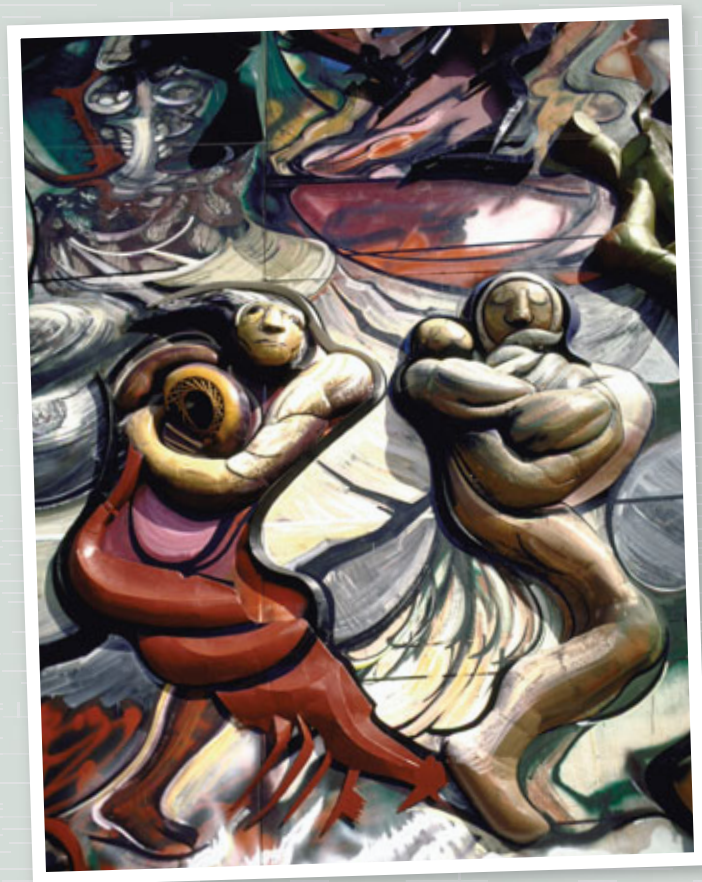
Artist Rip Cronk painted this mural for SPARC in 1989.



Wendy Connett/Alamy

The Murals of Mexico

Murals have a long history in Mexico. In the 1900s, there were three famous mural artists. Their names were Diego Rivera, José Orozco, and David Siqueiros. Judy Baca admired their work.



These women and their babies are from a mural by David Siqueiros.

STOP AND CHECK

Describe the *Mi Abuelita* mural.

The Great Wall of Los Angeles

In 1976, Judy was asked to paint a very long mural in Los Angeles. Los Angeles is made up of people from many different cultures. Judy wanted to show how they all contributed to the city. She created a mural that shows the history of Los Angeles.

The mural is called *The Great Wall of Los Angeles*. It shows the Native American people who lived in the area. It shows the arrival of the Spanish. It shows the immigrants that came later. It shows how some groups were treated poorly. It shows black and Hispanic people fighting for equal rights.



This part of *The Great Wall* shows the Native American people who first lived in the area.



This part of *The Great Wall* shows Asian Americans becoming citizens of the U.S.

The Great Wall of Los Angeles is half a mile long. It's the longest mural in the world. Over 400 people worked on it from 1976 to 1983. Many of them were teenagers. They came from all different backgrounds. But Judy isn't done yet. She wants to add to the mural. She wants to paint the latest events!



This photo shows a crew of *The Great Wall of Los Angeles* painters from the 1980s.

Looking after *The Great Wall*

The Great Wall is getting old. Some parts have been around for 35 years. Colors on the mural were fading. Some of the paint was peeling off. Now, a team of people is slowly cleaning and repainting it. They're bringing the bright colors back!



Judy is helping a team of people to clean and repaint *The Great Wall*.

STOP AND CHECK

What does *The Great Wall* show?

CHAPTER 3

More Recent Work

In 1996, Judy started the Digital Mural Lab. People in the lab use computers to create murals. For one project, art students made six big digital images. Each image stood for a different cultural group. Judy wanted to show that all of these groups are important. They are all part of the city and its history.



One mural shows Biddy Mason. Biddy was freed from slavery after coming to California. Biddy became a nurse who cared for the poor.



Teens from the Digital Mural Lab created this banner.

In 1999, Judy took 125 14-year-olds into the lab. The teens got into pairs. Each teen was teamed up with someone they wouldn't usually meet. They talked about how they were the same. They talked about how they were different. They made artwork showing what they learned. The art was made into banners that hung all over Los Angeles.

Judy Baca made Los Angeles a more colorful place. She helped fill the streets of Los Angeles with art. The art shows the struggles, hopes, and dreams of its people.



The Great Wall of Los Angeles is one of Judy Baca's greatest achievements.

"Have the biggest vision you can! If you can't dream it, it cannot occur."

—Judy Baca

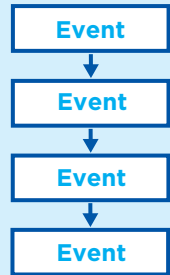
STOP AND CHECK

Describe one of Judy Baca's recent projects.

Respond to Reading

Summarize

Summarize the main things Judy Baca has done for the people of Los Angeles. Use the Sequence Chart to help you.



Text Evidence

1. What kind of text is *Judy Baca*?

Genre

2. What words or phrases on page 3 show events in order? Sequence
3. Find *citywide* on page 6. What do you think it means? Compound Words
4. Write about three of Judy's murals or projects. Put the events in the correct order. Write About Reading

Compare Texts

Read about three neighborhoods in Judy Baca's hometown of Los Angeles.

Vibrant Los Angeles

Want to check out some fun communities in Los Angeles?

Leimert Park

Leimert Park is home to many musicians. It has a club where anyone can get up on stage to test out their hip-hop rhymes. This is the longest-running hip-hop open-mic in the world.



Boyle Heights

Boyle Heights has a big Hispanic population. One well-known street corner there is Mariachi Plaza.

Mariachi bands gather on this corner. They play together in the evenings. People come to listen to them play. Then they hire the bands for weddings and parties.

Mariachi musicians perform at Mariachi Plaza.



Venice Beach

Venice Beach has many street performers. It also attracts people who aren't scared to take a tumble. It has a place for rope climbers and acrobats. Basketball players come to practice their skills, too. Some NBA stars have played on these ball courts.



Basketball players test their skills at Venice Beach.

Bill Bachmann/Photo Researchers/Getty Images



Make Connections

What skills or talents do people bring to each of the three neighborhoods? **Essential Question**

How is Judy Baca similar to the people from these neighborhoods?

How is she different? **Text to Text**

Glossary

digital images (*DI-juh-tuhl I-mij-iz*)
images made using a computer
(page 12)

immigrants (*I-muh-gruhnts*) people
who move to the U.S. from other
countries (page 8)

murals (*MYEW-ruh/z*) large artworks
painted on outdoor walls (page 2)

unity (*YEW-nuh-tee*) a feeling of
togetherness or agreement (page 4)

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Boyle Heights, 4, 17

digital images, 12

The Great Wall of

Los Angeles, 8–11, 14

Mexican Americans,

3, 4

Mi Abuelita, 5, 6

murals, 2, 4–8, 10–13

Focus on Social Studies

Purpose To design a mural for your neighborhood.

What to Do

Step 1

Choose a blank wall in your neighborhood.

Step 2

Find out about the people and places near the wall.

Step 3

Choose one event, person, or group.

Step 4

Design a mural about your subject. Map out the main images on a piece of paper or a computer.

Conclusion What did you learn about your neighborhood?

Thinkmark

The Topic

What is this book mostly about?

Vocabulary

What new words did you learn from the text?

Conclusions

What are the most important facts you learned?

Author's Purpose

Why do you think the author wrote this book?

Make Connections

Do you make art, and if so, why?
Are there murals where you live,
and if so, what are they about?