Judy Baca
by Anna Harris
Strategies & Skills

Comprehension Strategy: Ask and Answer Questions
Skill: Sequence

Vocabulary Strategy
Compound Words

Vocabulary
admired, classmates, community, contribute, practice, pronounce, scared, tumble

Word count: 828**

Ell Vocabulary
neighborhood, program

Content Standards
Social Studies
Culture and Diversity


**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.
Young Judy Baca

Judy Baca is an artist from Los Angeles. She paints **murals**. Murals are paintings on large walls.

Judy was born in 1946. Her family is from Mexico. As a young girl, Judy lived with her mother, two aunts, and a grandmother.
When Judy was six years old, she moved to a new neighborhood in Los Angeles. Judy had always talked in Spanish. At the new school, she wasn’t allowed to talk in Spanish. Judy had few Mexican American classmates.

At first, it was difficult for Judy to pronounce and understand English words. Her teacher let Judy draw and paint when she couldn’t understand the lessons. Judy began to love painting. Later, she studied modern art in college.

Language Detective: Judy is the subject of the sentence. What is the predicate?
After college, Judy worked for the city of Los Angeles. She worked in a neighborhood called Boyle Heights. She taught art classes in the parks. Groups of teenagers hung out in the parks. The groups did not get along. Judy asked the teenagers to help her paint a mural. She wanted the teenagers to get along.

When the mural was finished, people in the community loved it. The mural was called *Mi Abuelita*. It showed a Mexican American grandmother. She looked as if she was giving a hug. Many Mexican Americans lived in Boyle Heights. The mural appealed to the people’s Mexican heritage or traditions. The mural became a symbol of unity.

**In Other Words** gathered together. En español, *hung out* quiere decir *pasaban el tiempo*.
Mi Abuelita means “My Grandmother.”
The mural was painted in a park in Boyle Heights.
After the success of *Mi Abuelita*, Judy started a citywide mural program. She hired many young people to paint murals. They created about 500 murals in Los Angeles. In 1976, Judy helped start a new group called the Social and Public Art Resource Center, or SPARC. This group makes art for people of many different cultures.

Artist Rip Cronk painted this mural for SPARC in 1989.
The Murals of Mexico

Murals have been an artform in Mexico for a long time. The ancient Maya painted pictures on temple walls. In the 1900s, artists Diego Rivera, José Orozco, and David Siqueiros were famous. They were called Los Tres Grandes. They painted murals to show everyday people in Mexico. Judy Baca admired their work.

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

STOP AND CHECK

Describe the *Mi Abuelita* mural.
In 1976, Judy was asked to paint a very long mural in Los Angeles. Judy wanted to show how the people have contributed to the city. She created a mural that shows famous men and women and ordinary people. The mural is named *The Great Wall of Los Angeles*. It shows the history of California.

The mural begins at 20,000 B.C.E. It shows the Native American people who lived in California. It shows the Spanish who settled in California. It shows the immigrants that came later to California. It shows 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 United States.
The Great Wall of Los Angeles is half a mile long. It is one of the longest murals in the world. Over 400 people worked on the mural from 1976 to 1983. Many teenagers worked on the mural. They came from many different cultures. The mural is not finished yet. Judy is planning to paint the events of the 1960s to now!

This photo shows a group of The Great Wall of Los Angeles painters from the 1980s.
Looking after The Great Wall

Some parts of The Great Wall are more than 40 years old. The mural has dealt with sun, rain, and pollution. Now, it is getting fixed. A team of people is slowly cleaning every part of the mural. They are bringing back all the bright colors and images!

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

STOP AND CHECK

What does The Great Wall show?
In 1996, Judy started the Digital Mural Lab. People use computers to make murals. One project is called *Witnesses to L.A. History*. Art students made six large digital images. Each image stood for a different cultural group. Judy wanted to show that all of the cultural groups contribute to the city. They are part of the multiethnic history of Los Angeles.

**In Other Words** represented. En español, stood for quiere decir representaba.

One digital mural shows Biddy Mason. Biddy was freed from slavery after coming to California. Biddy became a nurse who cared for the poor.
In 1999, Judy began a project with 125 teenagers. The project was called Shoulder to Shoulder. Each teenager had a partner. The teenagers were partners with someone very different from them. The pairs talked about how they were the same and how they were different. Then the teenagers painted banners to show what they had learned. The banners were hung all over Los Angeles.
Judy has made Los Angeles a more colorful place. Judy Baca has helped fill Los Angeles with images. The images on her murals show the hopes and dreams of the people of Los Angeles.

"Have the biggest vision you can! If you can’t dream it, it cannot occur."
—Judy Baca

The Great Wall of Los Angeles could be Judy Baca’s greatest achievement.

Describe one of Judy Baca’s recent projects.
Respond to Reading

Summarize

Use details from Judy Baca to summarize the selection. Your graphic organizer may help you.

Text Evidence

1. How do you know Judy Baca is a biography? **Genre**

2. What words or phrases on page 3 show events in order? **Sequence**

3. What do you think citywide means? Read page 6 to help you figure out its meaning. **Compound Words**

4. Write about three of Judy’s murals or projects. Put the projects in order. **Write About Reading**
Let’s learn about some fun communities in Los Angeles.

**Leimert Park**

Many artists and musicians live in Leimert Park. Famous singers Ray Charles and Ella Fitzgerald lived there. Today, Leimert Park has many places to hear jazz music. It has a famous hip-hop show. Anyone from the audience can perform.
Boyle Heights

Many Hispanic people live in Boyle Heights. A street corner named Mariachi Plaza is popular. Mariachi bands play music together in the evenings. People come to listen to the music.

Mariachi musicians perform at Mariachi Plaza.
Venice Beach

Venice Beach has many street performers. Venice Beach also attracts people who aren’t scared to take a tumble. It has places for rope climbers and acrobats. Basketball players practice on the ball courts, too.

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 images made using a computer (page 12)

heritage ideas and traditions handed down from the past (page 4)

immigrants people who move to the U.S. from other countries (page 8)

multiethnic made up of people from many different cultures (page 12)

murals large artworks painted on walls (page 2)

unity a feeling of togetherness or agreement (page 4)

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Purpose To design a mural for your neighborhood

What to Do

Step 1 Choose a blank wall in your neighborhood.

Step 2 Find out more about the people and places around the wall.

Step 3 Choose one event, person, or group.

Step 4 Design a mural about your subject. Plan out the main images on a piece of paper or on a computer.

Conclusion What did you learn about your neighborhood?
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? How can art be helpful to people?