

NORMAN ROCKWELL

Lesson For Ages 10 - Adult



Step 1 - Introducing the Norman Rockwell Slideshow Guide

BEGIN READING HERE

MOTIVATION

Have you ever been called a name that hurt your feelings? I think everyone can relate to someone being mean and saying hurtful things. Today I want to tell you about a master artist named Norman Rockwell and what he had to go through as a child before he grew up to be one of America's most beloved artists. Look at his self-portrait as I tell you about his childhood troubles.

Click Start Lesson To Begin

DEVELOPMENT

1. Triple Self-Portrait

Norman Rockwell grew up in a rough New York City neighborhood. He was very tall and skinny and was terrible at sports. And to make things even worse, his older brother, Jarvis, was the best athlete in the neighborhood. Norman remembered being called a “skinny, pigeon-toed, narrow-shouldered lump” by other kids. Of course that made him sad, but he knew he was good in art, and many other kids looked up to him for his special talent and wanted to be his friend. Norman knew that he wanted to be an artist for as long as he could remember.

Raise your hand if you like your parents or teachers to read stories to you. When Norman was about four or five years old, his father would read to the family around their dining room table. Norman would try his best to draw characters from the story and make them come to life with his pencils and crayons.

At the age of sixteen he enrolled in art school, and it wasn't long before his teachers recognized his talent and got him his first paying job illustrating a children's book. Book and magazine publishers ask artists to do illustrations or pictures, and then they pay them for the work. Even at this young age, Rockwell looked at the world around him and painted what he saw with truth and humor. And the people of America loved his artwork. He painted familiar, everyday scenes. He made people feel his artwork was a part of their own lives. His paintings told a story without words.

Looking at this self-portrait, you will guess the title by counting how many portraits of Norman are contained in this painting. **(THREE)** It is titled “Triple Self-Portrait.” How clever of him to show us both his front and back at the same time! What is he using to

help him do this self-portrait? **(MIRROR)** Can you find where he has pinned up self-portraits by four other very famous artists? Point to them. **(UPPER RIGHT HAND CORNER OF CANVAS)** Can anyone recognize any of the artists? **(VAN GOGH, REMBRANDT, PICASSO, DURER)** As an art student Norman really enjoyed going to museums to make him a better artist.

Rockwell paid great attention to small things called details. See if you can find some of the same things I did and point to them. I see paintbrushes dropped on the floor. **(BOTTOM)** I see a golden helmet. **(CENTER, TOP)** I see a glass of soda. **(LOWER RIGHT)** I see smoke coming from a lit cigarette. **(LOWER RIGHT)** He took great care to make it real, with many little details like you've just found. It's fun to keep investigating to see if we've missed anything. Would you like to see a photograph of Mr. Rockwell, and see if he looks like his self-portrait? Let's take a look.

Click Next To Change Slide

2. Photo of Rockwell

Raise your hand if you recognize him. **(YES)** What is different? **(NOT WEARING GLASSES)** This photo was taken when he was younger and did not need glasses. What is the same in both the self-portrait and photo? **(SMOKING PIPE, PAINTING, HOLDING PALETTE, PAINTBRUSH)**

Norman's artwork was so outstanding that soon he had lots of jobs. A friend told Norman to "shoot for the stars." What does that phrase mean? That's right—shoot high for something you think is beyond your reach.

So what was that dream job where Norman had to "shoot for the stars"? The most popular magazine of that time was called *The Saturday Evening Post*. It was Rockwell's dream to illustrate for them. The magazine had been in business for 100 years and was started by Benjamin Franklin. So Rockwell gathered his courage and painted two sample magazine covers. He took the train into the city and very nervously presented his work to the art director. He was so nervous, he was soaked with sweat as he awaited their decision.

Guess what they told him. Show me with a thumbs up or down. Yes! They bought both paintings and ordered three more! They loved his work.

Let's take a look at another self-portrait of Norman struggling with starting to create a new magazine cover for *The Saturday Evening Post*.

Click Next To Change Slide

3. Artist Facing Blank Canvas

Do you think this was easy or difficult for him from what you see? Why? **(DIFFICULT—WAY HE'S SITTING, MESS ON FLOOR, BLANK CANVAS)** Rockwell is showing us that dreadful moment when he's faced with a blank canvas, and he has to come up with a new, fresh idea. Do you think that would be hard to do time after time? It was hard work, but that probably never occurred to the millions of readers who picked up *The Saturday Evening Post* each week to enjoy Rockwell's covers.

Do you think he stayed in this job for very long? You might be surprised to learn that he finished over 300 covers for *The Post* and worked for them for about 50 years. He had a great talent for creating covers that would jump out from a crowded magazine rack. When his artwork appeared on the cover, the magazine sales would jump up 280,000 copies. Americans loved Norman Rockwell's art.

So let's enjoy a few of his covers, like the people who bought his magazines.

[Click Next To Change Slide](#)

4. Doctor and Doll

Raise your hand if you get a little nervous when you have to go to the doctor. How is the doctor trying to make this little girl feel more comfortable? **(EXAMINES HER DOLL FIRST)** How can you tell he hasn't examined the girl yet? **(HAT, JACKET, MITTENS, SCARF)** Does her face show doubt and uncertainty about being there? **(YES)** Does the doctor seem patient and kind? **(YES)**

Let's investigate the small details Rockwell included. Find a detail that interests you and point it out to us. **(TAKE SEVERAL RESPONSES AND POINT THEM OUT ON THE SCREEN)** Can you tell me how much the magazine cost back then? **(5 CENTS)**

The next painting is a fun holiday cover. Which holiday will you see?

[Click Next To Change Slide](#)

5. Extra Good Boys and Girls

Did you guess Christmas? Can you tell me the title of this cover painting? **(EXTRA GOOD BOYS AND GIRLS)** Notice how Santa is planning the map to go here and there to make sure he doesn't leave any deserving child out of his route. Imagine Mr. Rockwell having to create an original Christmas cover every year for more than fifty years! But he came up with one every time, like you see here. To gain the honor of designing the magazine's Christmas cover, Rockwell had to prove himself to his magazine editor for three years, but he never disappointed him with any cover he submitted.

Besides the picture of Santa and the background map, what else is included in this cover of the magazine? **(LETTERING)** An illustrator must also pay attention to information that is part of the overall design. What details are always included on a magazine cover, like

you see here? **(NAME, PRICE, DATE, HEADLINES)** An important task of an illustrator is to work out the best arrangement of the artwork, lettering, and graphics. What do you think are the graphics on this cover? **(TWO PARALLEL LINES, TOP AND BOTTOM)** When you put all these elements together, it is called a layout. You will be doing a layout in your art activity.
Let's leave Santa now to meet some everyday people.

[Click Next To Change Slide](#)

6. Saying Grace

Can you tell where this is? **(RESTAURANT)** Does it look like a place you'd like to go? **(NO)** It looks crowded, noisy, and smoky. But what is going on in the midst of all that clutter? **(PEOPLE PRAYING)** Are other people interested in what the woman and child are doing? **(YES—STARING AT THEM)** Does it seem to bother the grandmother and child? **(NO)** Is the painting filled with details? **(YES)** Pick out one that caught your attention. **(ANSWERS WILL VARY)** The title of this painting is "Saying Grace." The little boy was very special to Rockwell. It was his oldest son, Jerry.
What season of the year would you guess it might be? **(FALL OR WINTER—COATS, HATS, UMBRELLAS)** Mr. Rockwell lived in the New England area of the United States and enjoyed the variety of seasons. Not only did he illustrate for magazines and books, he produced many calendars as well. For one of his famous calendars he used one of his favorite themes—the contrast of young and old. Let's begin with a beautiful spring day.

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7. Grandpa and Me Going Fishing

Raise your hand if you've ever gone fishing or would like to some day. Give me a word to describe how this boy is feeling? **(EXCITED, HAPPY, ENERGETIC)** It's hard to say whether it is the boy, the old man, or the pet dog that gets the most out of this adventure together. Take in all the details Rockwell has included in the three characters. But the landscape is very sketchy and sparse. We don't need those details to tell the story of this perfect day together.
Let's move on to the lazy days of summer.

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8. Grandpa and Me in Summer

Has the mood changed? **(YES)** It's so quiet and relaxing that you want to join them. Are they wearing the same clothes? **(YES)** Do you notice other details he didn't change? **(MANY)** Even though Rockwell was born in New York City, his parents went to the country every summer for vacation. Norman always looked forward to summer, because it meant that he would, for a while, be able to escape the brick and asphalt city neighborhood that confined him for the rest of the year. What will grandpa and grandson do in the fall?

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9. Grandpa and Me in Fall

Did you guess raking colorful leaves? During Rockwell's childhood, everyone who owned property would get rid of leaves by burning them in large piles instead of putting them out for the trash pickup. In this composition Rockwell shows the boy quite fascinated with fire. His grandfather is supervising but is lost in his own thoughts. Besides the leaves falling, what else signals the approach of colder weather? **(GEESE FLYING SOUTH FOR THE WINTER)** And what will winter bring for their activity?

[Click Next To Change Slide](#)

10. Grandpa and Me IN WINTER

Does this look like fun? Raise you hand if you've ever been ice-skating. Who seems to be enjoying himself the most? **(GRANDPA)** On a day that should send him scurrying to the fireside with aching bones, he dazzles his grandson with his skill on skates. What number has he carved in the ice with his skating? **(8)** And he is so proud of himself! Do you think these two posed for Mr. Rockwell for each seasonal painting? During the first part of his career Norman used real models all the time. Sometimes he used his neighbors. But later he began to use photographs instead to cut down on posing time and expenses. It allowed him much more freedom of choosing when he wanted to work.

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11. Rockwell Posing

He always paid great attention to the selection of models, often demonstrating the poses himself to get it just right. He had a vast collection of costumes and props. Notice how he is both posing with his models and has dressed up himself in a top hat.

One terrible night Rockwell's art studio burned to the ground. Countless sketches and many original finished paintings were lost in the fire. Also lost were the vast collection of costumes and props, his files, even his favorite paintbrushes. Understanding his loss, his neighbors pitched in. They helped him build a new studio, and they donated costumes to replace the collection he had lost. He was deeply moved by this experience, and it reinforced his belief in the goodness of the American people.

The fire, thankfully, came shortly after he had completed and delivered to *The Post* the last painting in a series of four masterpieces. They are called "The Four Freedoms." This first painting was a favorite of Rockwell's.

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12. Freedom of Speech

Norman was too old to enlist as a soldier in World War II. So he decided to help with the war effort in the best way he could. President Roosevelt gave a famous speech in 1943 called "The Four Freedoms." Those were freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from want, and freedom from fear. So Mr. Rockwell made each freedom the subject of a painting. Which freedom is he showing here? **(SPEECH)**

We see democracy at work in a small community at an annual town meeting. A young worker stands up to tell his views on some matter that is clearly of great importance to him. Are the townspeople listening respectfully? **(YES)** Notice how his head is silhouetted against a blackboard. Maybe the man is in the very schoolroom where he learned the principles of democracy that now brought him to his feet.

What freedom will we see next?

[Click Next To Change Slide](#)

13. Freedom of Worship

It's easy to understand the message here. Notice how simply Rockwell has told the story with only heads and hands of people of different faiths joined in the act of prayer. Is there much color? **(NO)** Does it detract from the impact? **(NO)** It unified them instead.

Next, we will see freedom from. . .

[Click Next To Change Slide](#)

14. Freedom from Fear

...Fear. When we go to sleep at night, we should be peaceful and without fear that we will be harmed in any way. In this painting Rockwell captures one of those everyday moments at home to which we can all relate.

It all looks so loving and peaceful until you notice the detail on the newspaper held by the Father. Can you read the headlines upside down? It partially reads: Bombings, Kill, Horror, Hitler. It is a fearful time of uncertainty during World War II that Rockwell contrasts with the safety of children asleep in their comfortable beds, surrounded by the love and concern of their parents.

“The Four Freedoms” was bought by *The Saturday Evening Post* and published as an inside supplement. Much later the Office of War Information reproduced them by the hundreds of thousands, even dropping copies into the European war front. The last freedom will remind you of an American celebration.

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15. Freedom From Want

What holiday does this make you think of? **(THANKSGIVING)** We can't help but notice the happy expressions of the faces of the gathered family. Sunlight is streaming through the window and on to the tableware and smiling faces. Remember, this was painted during the war when food supplies were scarce, so this feast was double appealing. What freedom is Rockwell showing? **(FROM WANT)**

So, did Rockwell participate in a meaningful way in World War II after all, even though he was too old to be a soldier? **(YES)**

Not only did he remind the nation of what World War II was about, he went on to record other important turning points in America's history. The title of this next painting is “The Problem We All Live With.”

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16. The Problem We All Live With

What problem in American history is he showing? **(SCHOOL INTEGRATION)** Rockwell painted this moving scene of a small African-American girl, dressed in immaculate white, being escorted to school by four U.S. Marshals past a wall splattered with tomatoes and racist graffiti. Who is the only figure that is seen completely? **(GIRL)** The contrast between the child's white dress and the filthy wall is memorable and clear.

Rockwell was enormously important as a guide to the American way of life during his lifetime. He was so versatile that he changed his artistic styles with the times. When the times called for it, he portrayed tragedy, hope, or peace. He saw the poetry and beauty of everyday life and made others see it also. He saw the humor and sadness and passed those emotions on.

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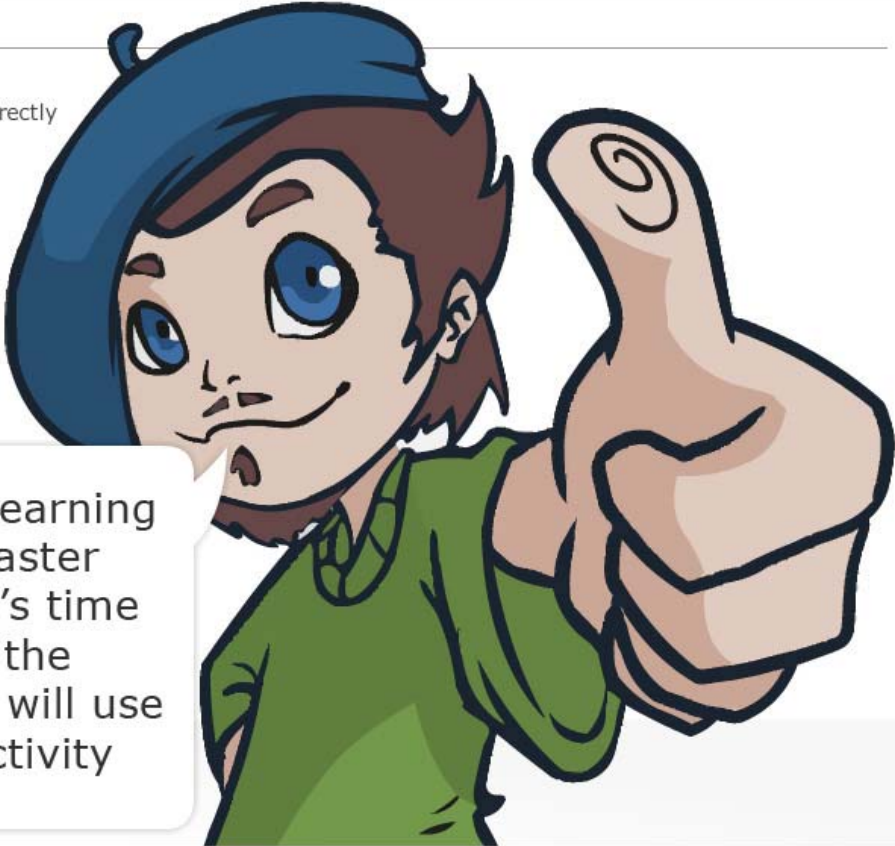
CONCLUSION

When Norman Rockwell retired from *The Saturday Evening Post*, the magazine ran a questionnaire asking the readers to choose their all-time favorite cover. Let's see how you would have voted before I tell you the one they chose. I will go back over all the paintings. Vote for your favorite. **(REVERSE TO ALL SLIDES AND ESTIMATE VOTES)** You chose _____ (TITLE). The readers of *The Saturday Evening Post* chose "Saying Grace" as their all-time favorite! Did that surprise you?

Click Next To Finish Lesson

Lesson Finished

You have answered
10 out of 10 questions correctly

A cartoon illustration of a young boy with brown hair, blue eyes, and a blue beret. He is wearing a green shirt and is pointing his right index finger towards the viewer. A speech bubble is positioned to his left, containing text.

Did you enjoy learning about our Master Artist? Now it's time to practice the techniques you will use in your art activity



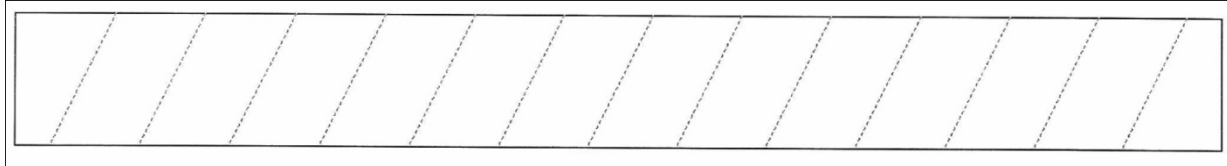
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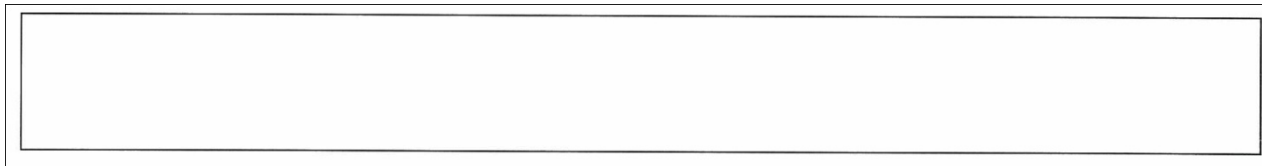
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Step 2 - Learning From: Norman Rockwell

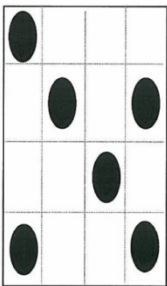
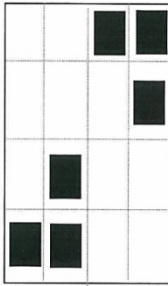
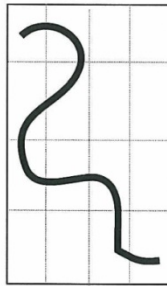
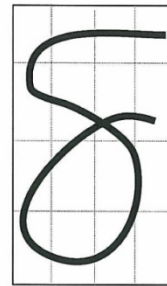

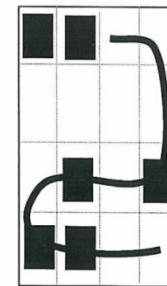
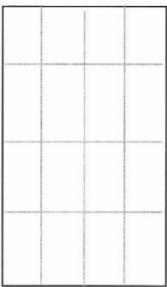
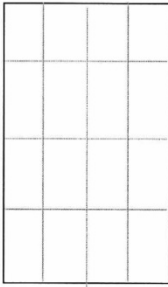
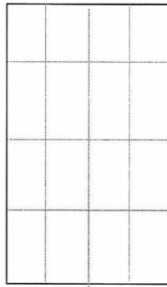
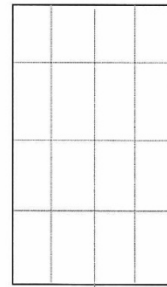
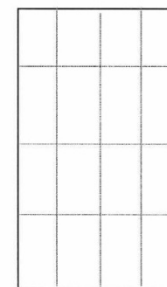
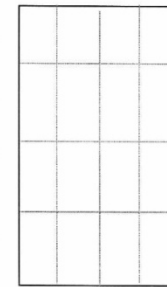
An Italic lettering style has letters that are slanted.
Print your name in the slanted places below.



Now draw slanted lines in the box below.
Then print the name of your favorite season in italic letters.



An illustrator uses a grid to copy designs.
Copy the designs into the boxes below, matching the grid spaces.

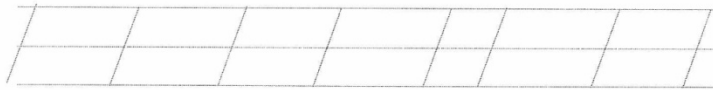
					
					

The Saturday Evening Post was the magazine that Norman Rockwell illustrated. Copy the letters below using the guidelines to write SATURDAY POST

SATURDAY



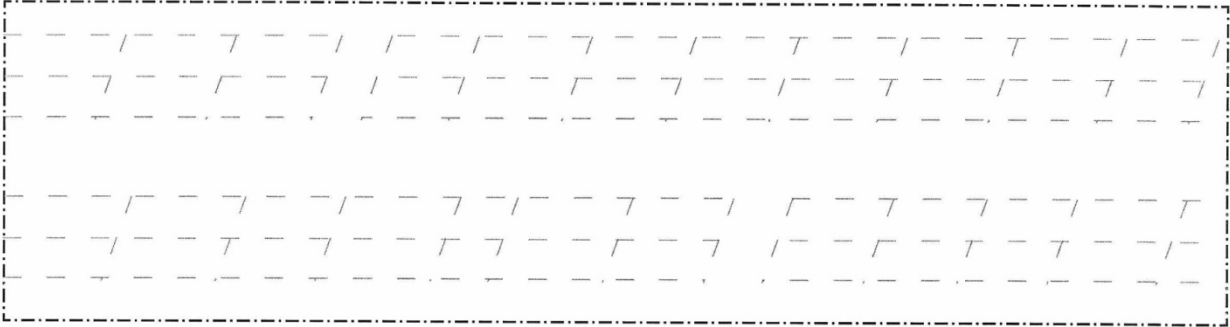
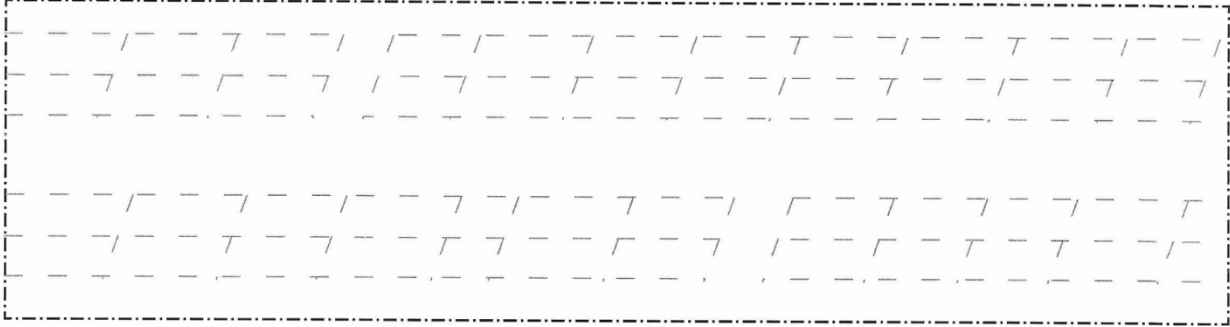
EVENING



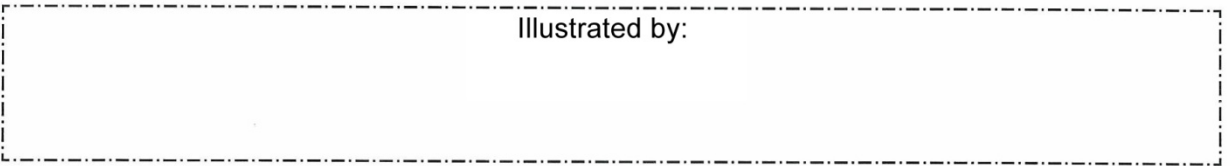
POST



THE SATURDAY EVENING POST



Illustrated by:



SAVE THIS PAGE FOR YOUR ART ACTIVITY



The last few pages of this section contain the Art Activity for Norman Rockwell. This step-by-step outline will be a guide for instructing your child(ren) through the activity. The parent/instructor should review all steps necessary to complete this project before beginning any work.

Cut out the Artist Profile Slip below and attach it to the back of the completed art project.

NORMAN ROCKWELL

American 1894-1978

Norman Rockwell was enormously important as a guide to the American way of life. He saw the poetry, beauty, humor and sadness of everyday life and made others see it in his *Saturday Evening Post* magazine illustrations.

ART ACTIVITY EMPHASIS: Detail in Magazine Covers

MEDIA: Oil Pastel, Graph Paper, Marker

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ART ACTIVITY EMPHASIS: Detail in Magazine Covers

MEDIA: Oil Pastel, Graph Paper, Marker

Step 3 - Working With: Art Activity Instructions

ARTIST

Norman Rockwell
1894-1978
American

ART ELEMENTS

Detail

MEDIA

Oil Pastels

EMPHASIS

Magazine cover illustrations and layout

LEVEL

Advanced

VOCABULARY

Detail, illustrator, font, layout

PRINT

The Saturday Evening Post

SUGGESTED MUSIC

Music of the 1900s

©

MATERIALS FOR INSTRUCTOR AND STUDENTS

One 12" x 18" any color construction paper (no white or black)

One 3" x 8" piece of black construction paper

One 1-1/2" x 8" piece of black construction paper

One 7-1/2" x 8" piece of black construction paper

One paper towel (*for wiping fingers*)

Artist Profile Slip

Boxes of oil pastels

Black markers

7" circle stencil

Masking tape (for instructor only)

Glue

Scissors

Pencil

Completed Learning Packet – Page 3 to be used for project

PREPARATION

Place the Rockwell print in front of the room. Construct an example to become familiar with the procedure. Tape Page 3 of the Learning Packet to the board. Have black papers, circle stencil, oil pastels, marker, pencil, scissors, glue, and large construction paper close by.

SET-UP [5 minutes]

Distribute the materials:

SUPPLIES [2] One box of oil pastels, black marker to each student

PAPER [7] One large colored construction paper, three black paper pieces, circle stencil, paper towel, and artist profile slip to each student

ORIENTATION [2 minutes]

Norman Rockwell enjoyed showing people doing everyday things. He included details on his magazine covers that caught the American people’s attention. You are joining Rockwell in becoming an illustrator today. You will design an interesting magazine cover. Your layout will include an illustration and lettering.

Demonstration AND ACTIVITY

ORGANIZE YOUR WORK AREA [3 minutes]

- 1.Place the 12” x 18” construction paper on the center of your desk.
- 2.Place your oil pastels at the top corner of your desk.
- 3.Put your artist profile slip, paper towel, circle stencil, black pieces of paper (smallest on top), and Page 3 of the Learning Packet at the other corner of your desk stacked in that order with Page 3 on top.
- 4.Fold the large 12” x 18” construction paper in half and place it on the floor.

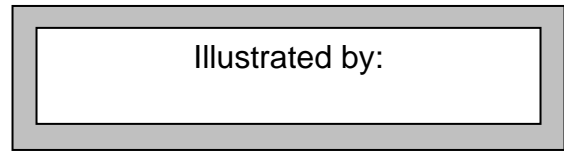
CREATE COVER LETTERING [7 minutes]

- 1.Put page 3 from the Learning Packet vertically in the center of your desk.
- 2.Notice how the letters in the title are slanted. This is often called “italic.” Use the guidelines in the first practice box to draw the “TITLE” letters with your pencil. Draw the letters, with your pencil again, in the second box.
- 3.Go over the letters with the tip of the black marker. Use the side of the tip for thicker lines.
- 4.Sign your name in the “Illustrated by:” box with the black marker.
- 5.Cut out the “TITLE” and “Illustrated by:” boxes in which you have written. Cut out the remaining blank ½” high long box below the “Illustrated by:” box. Set the three pieces aside.



MOUNTING THE LETTERING [7 minutes]

1. On the 1-1/2" x 8" smallest black paper, mount the cut out "Illustrated by:" box. Leave a border of black paper around the grid rectangle. Glue down with a small amount of glue at each corner.



2. Mount the "TITLE" BOX on the 3" x 8" black strip of black paper. Center the box so that there is a black border all around it.



DRAWING WITH OIL PASTELS [1 minute]

How are oil pastels different from crayons? (Oil pastels are softer, brighter, oil-based instead of wax-based; they smell of oil; they are messier.)

1. Roll up your sleeves.
2. As you use the pastels, put them back in the box, not on the desk. Put one color per row.
3. Wipe your fingers on your paper towel if your hands get messy.
4. When done put all pastels flat in the box, one color per row, before you close the lid.

DRAWING A COLORFUL SEASON SYMBOL [15 minutes]

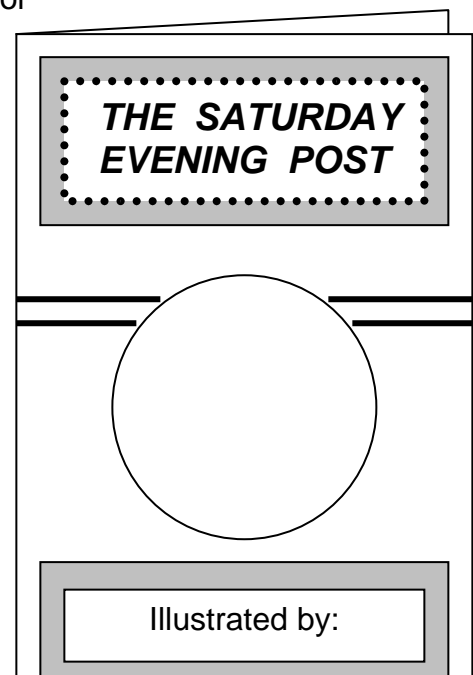
Lead a discussion of the seasons and some symbols. List some season symbols on the board.

1. Using a pencil, trace the 7" circle stencil onto the 7-1/2" x 8" largest black paper piece.
2. Choose a season and using the oil pastels, draw a symbol of that season in the circle. Refer to the learning packet for more ideas. Make it large, to fill the circle. Encourage the students to keep drawings simple. Humans are hard to draw!
3. Put away your oil pastels and wipe your hands on the paper towel.
4. Cut out the circle.

CREATE MAGAZINE COVER [5 minutes]

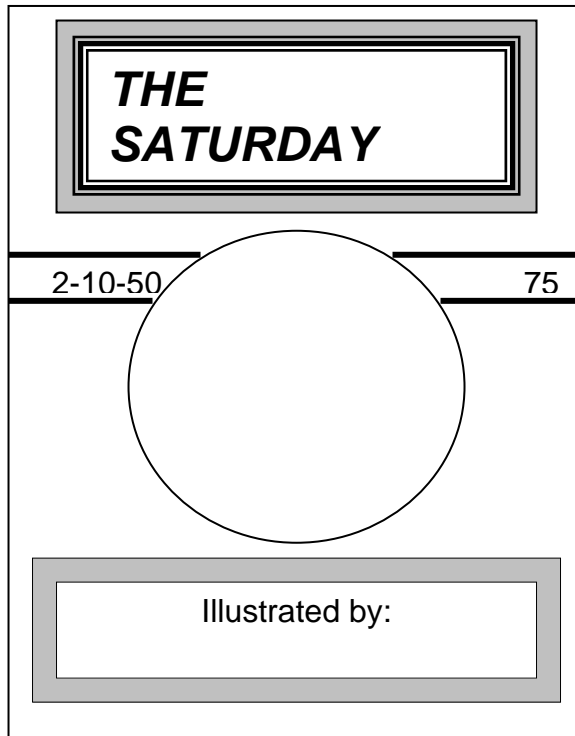
1. Pick up the 12" x 18" folded piece of colored construction paper to create a 9" x 12" front cover. Place the fold on the left side, so that it opens like a book.
2. Arrange the three black pieces in your cover layout as follows:

The "TITLE" centered across the top with a colorful border all around



Illustrated by: _____ centered at the bottom.
Circle drawing centered in the middle of the two.

3. When the pieces are in place, glue each piece down. A minimum of glue is encouraged. One dot in each corner or several dots around the edge of the circle will do. (Glue down upper half of circle after step 4.)
4. Before gluing the circle down on the top half, cut the ½” high long blank strip in half, and using a small amount of glue, secure each half across the cover, about 1” to 1-1/2” below the title box on either side of and under the circle.
5. When all dry, go over the top and bottom edges of the white strips with the black pen.
6. In the left space, with the marker, write the date. Students can abbreviate with numbers, i.e.: 5-83 for May, 1983, or write it out in small letters.
7. In the right space, write the price using the ¢ sign.



MOUNTING THE ARTIST PROFILE SLIP [1 minute]

(Profile slips for each artist are provided. They give a brief description of the artist, the technique, and the media used in the art activity. They should be mounted on the back of art projects after completed.)

1. Write your name on the front of the artist profile slip.
 2. Using glue, mount the profile slip on the back of your magazine cover.
- .Encourage students to discuss their artwork at home using this artist slip of information.

EXTENSION

Have the students fill their covers with stories, ads, and pictures!

CONCLUSION [1 minute]

Did you enjoy your day as a magazine illustrator? Your colorful seasonal illustrations are very interesting on your covers. You followed the same steps as Rockwell when he did his layouts. Remember, he designed over 300 covers for *The Saturday Evening Post*. Maybe you will even be an author later on and add some interesting articles to go inside your magazine!

THIS CONCLUDES NORMAN ROCKWELL UNIT.