

# Inspiration: Norman Rockwell and You

## Overview:

This lesson will address Norman Rockwell's points of inspiration including daily life in America and American culture. Students will then engage in an illustration project including a communal sketch, draft and final piece. The students will consider Rockwell's quote, "I was showing the America I knew and observed to others that might not have noticed."

This lesson is designed for two 20 minute class periods.

**GRADE**

K-1

**THEME**

Four Freedoms, Artistic Process

**LENGTH**

This lesson is designed for two 20 minute periods.

**DISCIPLINE**

Art

**VOCABULARY**

Culture; Narrative; Outline; Representational Art; Sequence; Symbol

## Enduring Understandings/ Essential Questions:

Norman Rockwell was inspired by his own experiences and life around him. Generally, he was influenced by what he experienced on his vacations, nature, his neighbors and friends. He was inspired by American culture, including holidays and celebrations. Norman Rockwell was also inspired by specific groups, such as the Boy Scouts of America although he, himself, was not a member of the group.

- What inspired Norman Rockwell?
- What do you find inspirational?
- What is something you see everyday in your life?

## Objectives:

- Students will consider their everyday life including cultural and religious events as a means of inspiration in creating artwork.
- Students will look closely at and analyze *The Gossips* from a cultural point of view.
- Students will look closely at and analyze *Day in the Life of a Little Girl*, and *Day in the Life of a Little Boy*, and consider how these images are similar or differ from their own daily life.
- Students will complete a Think Sheet as a group so they may begin brainstorming ideas for a class drawing about what happens everyday in their classroom.

## Background:

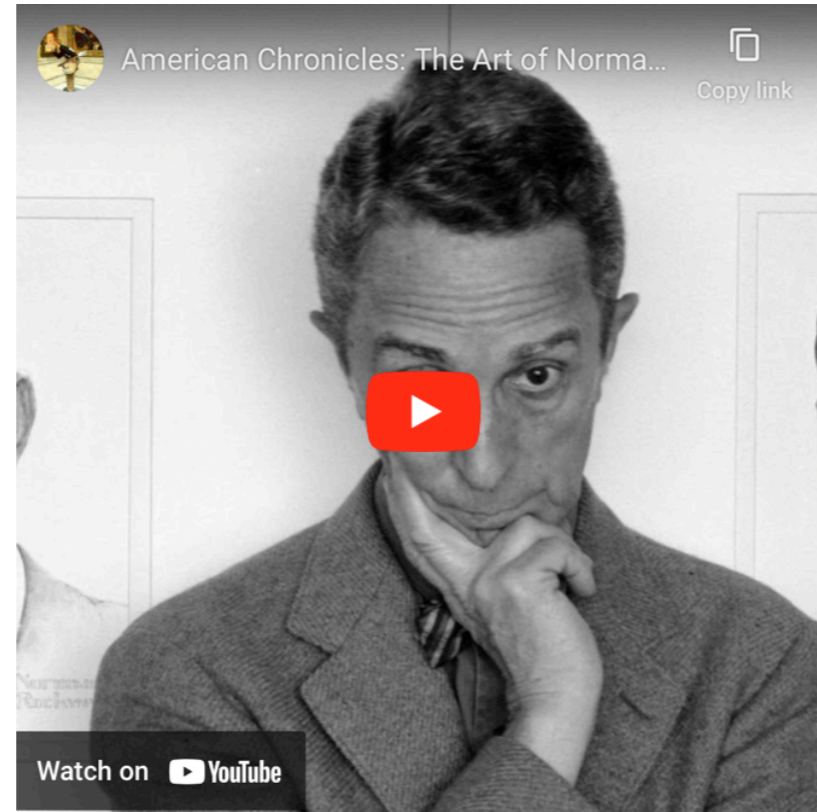
Norman Rockwell was surrounded by a supportive (and inspirational) community of friends and fellow artists when he lived in Arlington, Vermont from 1939 to 1953. During this time he created *The Gossips* which became the most popular *Saturday Evening Post* cover in 33 years. Norman Rockwell used his neighbors as models, but did not want to insult them so he put himself and his wife into the cover design to avoid any suspicions his friends might have. The very first version began with just two gossips, then ten and finally developed into the multiple frames you see today.

# Materials:

## Multimedia Resources:



Norman Rockwell (1894-1978)  
*The Gossips*, 1948.  
Painting for *The Saturday Evening Post* cover, March 6, 1948.  
Oil on canvas.  
Private collection. ©SEPS: Curtis Publishing, Indianapolis, IN



American Chronicles: The Art of Norman Rockwell  
Norman Rockwell Museum



Norman Rockwell (1894-1978)  
*A Day in the Life of a Girl*, 1952  
Oil on canvas  
Cover illustration *The Saturday Evening Post*, August 30, 1952  
Norman Rockwell Museum Collection  
©1952 SEPS: Curtis Licensing, Indianapolis, IN



Norman Rockwell (1894-1978)  
*A Day in the Life of a Boy*, 1952  
Oil on canvas  
Cover illustration *The Saturday Evening Post*, May 24, 1952  
©1952 SEPS: Curtis Licensing, Indianapolis, IN

## Classroom Supplies [Link to resources below: Links](#)

- [American Chronicles: The Art of Norman Rockwell](#) by Linds Szekely Pero
- Large easel with paper pad and pen
- **Worksheet:** Story Sequence of My Life Think Sheet K-1
- Crayons
- Final Draft Paper (large rolled paper or drawing easel paper)

### Additional Teaching Resources:

[The Norman Rockwell Museum at Stockbridge](#) by The Norman Rockwell Museum

[Norman Rockwell: Behind the Camera](#) by Ron Schick

[Norman Rockwell's America](#) by Christopher Finch

[Norman Rockwell's Four Freedoms: Images that Inspire a Nation](#) by Stuart Murray, and James McCabe

[Norman Rockwell's Counting Book](#) by Gloria Tabor

[Norman Rockwell: Storyteller with a Brush](#) by Beverly Sherman

[My Adventures as an Illustrator](#) by Norman Rockwell

[A Rockwell Portrait: An Intimate Biography](#) by Donald Walton

# Activities:

## Class 1

Prepare a marker/chalk/crayon and a board or easel to write on. The students will be seated in a comfortable way so they are able to see one another and can participate in a class conversation led by the instructor.

1. Ask the students to listen attentively to one another as they share personal responses throughout the lesson.
2. Ask the students to explain a particular routine within the classroom. For example, when the children enter, what is expected of them? What is the routine of going out for recess or going to lunch?
3. Show an image of *The Gossips* by Norman Rockwell and ask the students if anyone has seen this illustration before. The children will be asked to point out only what they see, not what they perceive at first. The class will collectively take a visual inventory. As each student contributes, restate their observation. You might be able to elaborate on what they have said to add more visual detail or you might ask them for clarification. You might encourage them to look more closely and carefully. By doing this, the students will analyze the work and find clues and symbols to help read the visual image, revealing American culture.
4. Ask the students what they think is happening in the image. Is this a routine? Do they see this sort of event happen at school or in their community?
5. Read an excerpt from *American Chronicles: The Art of Norman Rockwell*, by Linda Szekely Pero explaining what inspired Norman Rockwell and how his family and surroundings helped grant him creative ideas for his artwork (page 99-100.) Upon completion, ask the children to recall some of Rockwell's points of inspiration.
6. Show two other images by Rockwell and allow for time for the children to look at closely: *Day in the Life of a Little Girl*, *Day in the Life of a Little Boy*. Ask the students to explain the sequence of the images looking closely and using the clues that Rockwell provides.
7. Ask the students to give examples of a sequence of events that happen in school. A Think Sheet is provided as a reference to assist the instructor in prompting the students to brainstorm ideas about a sequence of events that they experience everyday at school. When you feel there is enough information, decide on one of the examples for the class illustration. Ask the students how the event could be drawn in a sequence of 3 images and sketch them out roughly for the students' to see and feel included as a part of the sketching and planning.
8. As preparation for the next class, the instructor will illustrate the three drawings in black marker on a large piece of paper (on a large roll of paper suitable for a bulletin board or each drawing may be on a piece of easel paper.)

## Class 2

9. Present the students with the three illustrations and talk about what materials, tools and techniques may be used to color in the images. In thinking like Rockwell, what materials might work best to see and understand the drawings? Students will work together to paint or color the drawing with crayons or colored pencils.
10. The students will help to write a class statement (like an Artist's Statement) about their illustration series.

# Assessment:

Students will be evaluated on demonstrating appropriate listening and speaking skills during their participation in the group discussion. They will be evaluated on their participation in analyzing the visual imagery through informal checks of understanding through questions and on the participating in coloring the final illustrations.

# Standards:

This curriculum meets the standards listed below. Look for more details on these standards please visit: [ELA](#) and [Math Standards, Social Studies Standards, Visual Arts Standards](#).

## Applied Standards

VA:Cn11.1.1

Understand that people from different places and times have made art for a variety of reasons.

VA:Cr1.2.1

Use observation and investigation in preparation for making a work of art.

VA:Cr1.2.K

Engage collaboratively in creative art-making in response to an artistic problem.

VA:Cr2.1.1

Explore uses of materials and tools to create works of art or design.

VA:Cr2.1.K

Through experimentation, build skills in various media and approaches to art-making.

VA:Cr2.2.1

Demonstrate safe and proper procedures for using materials, tools, and equipment while making art.

VA:Cr2.2

.KIdentify safe and non-toxic art materials, tools, and equipment.

VA:Cr3.1.1

Use art vocabulary to describe choices while creating art.

VA:Cr3.1.K

Explain the process of making art while creating.

VA:Re7.1.1

Select and describe works of art that illustrate daily life experiences of one's self and others.

VA:Re7.2.K

Describe what an image represents.

VA:Re8.1.1

Interpret art by categorizing subject matter and identifying the characteristics of form.

VA:Re8.1.K

Interpret art by identifying subject matter and describing relevant details.

VA:Re9.1.1

Classify artwork based on different reasons for preferences.

VA:Re9.1.K

Explain reasons for selecting a preferred artwork.







Norman  
Rockwell