

## Quick Pics: Animals

### Overview – Animals



*How it is that animals understand things I do not know, but it is certain that they do understand. Perhaps there is a language which is not made of words and everything in the world understands it. Perhaps there is a soul hidden in everything and it can always speak, without even making a sound, to another soul.*

— Frances Hodgson Burnett

Norman Rockwell invites us to notice the roles animals play in our lives. Animals convey feelings, set tone, and shape narratives to complete many of his visual stories. As you pay attention to how Rockwell uses animals in his images, what do you notice?

How can paying attention to the animals in art help us understand our own feelings and emotions?

#### GRADE

K-6

#### THEME

Quick Pics

#### LENGTH

Each Quick Pic activity is about 5-10 minutes in duration, with each being taught one image per day over a week.

#### DISCIPLINE

Social Studies, Language Arts: Speaking and Listening, Art

#### VOCABULARY

Animals, dogs, cats, horses, oxen, snakes, birds

## Willie Was Different (1966)



**Norman Rockwell (1894 – 1978)**  
*Willie Was Different (Miss Polly Playing the Flute)*,  
1966  
Illustration for *Willie Was Different* by Norman and  
Mollie Rockwell, 1966  
Oil on board  
Norman Rockwell Museum Collection,  
NRM.1973.099

*Willie Was Different* is a children's story written and illustrated by Norman Rockwell and his wife Molly. It is the only picture book that he created in his seventy year career.

Willie is a bird, a wood thrush, with a magical gift for making music.

Willie and his story invite us to think about the satisfaction and meaning of friendship, and the joy of doing and sharing the things that we love.

### Notice and Wonder...

- Notice the open window, Willie the wood thrush, and Miss Polly leaning forward towards Willie.
- What are Miss Polly and Willie doing together?
- What is the feeling the painting conveys?
- How did Norman Rockwell use light coming through the window to help keep focus on Willie, Miss Polly and their special connection? What are the clues that they are friends?

### Fun Facts...

- In the story, Willie loves to sing and has a special gift for music. He decides to leave his feathered friends to take up singing with Miss Polly, a talented flutist.
- Miss Polly and Willie create a unique and unusual partnership, and together they become famous. They eventually travel to the nation's capital, Washington, DC, where they perform on a concert stage so that Willie's beautiful singing can be heard and appreciated by many people.
- Willie enjoyed the attention at first, but the bustle of city life distresses Willie so much that he stops singing. Concerned for him, Miss Polly decides to bring
- Willie back to his native woods, where he can begin doing what he loves best again – singing with his very good friend in a quieter setting.
- Like Willie, Norman Rockwell distinguished himself as a boy with his artistic talents, and people noticed. He loved to draw, and when growing up in New York
- City, his friends and older brother Jarvis often asked him to sketch soldiers, ships, and animals that they could cut out and play with. His gift for drawing became a way to connect with others.
- In 1966, Rockwell wrote the story about Willie and Miss Polly's friendship, and about Willie's special talent. Rockwell's wife Molly, a retired English teacher, rewrote the text and expanded it. This was an exciting collaborative project for them.

### What can you do?

- Think about the animals in your life who are part of your story. They might be pets in your home, pigeons or squirrels outside, or a neighbor's dog. Most of us live in places where there are at least a few animals to notice.
- Think about your own special talents. What are you good at and what do you love to do? Make a list on paper or in your mind. Celebrate, enjoy, and grow your interests and gifts, and share them with others.

## Aunt Ella Takes a Trip (1942)



**Norman Rockwell (1894 – 1978)**  
*Aunt Ella Takes a Trip*, 1942  
Oil on canvas  
Story illustration for *Ladies' Home Journal*, April 1942  
Norman Rockwell Museum Collection,  
NRM.1983.09  
© 1942 Norman Rockwell Family Agency. All Rights Reserved.

This painting tells a story about Aunt Ella, her nieces, and her horse, Nell. Aunt Ella declares her independence and drives to town on her own to run an errand at a time when it was not typical for women to drive their own carriages. Nell and Aunt Ella show us they are a strong team.

Rockwell illustrates the complex emotions Aunt Ella and Liz'beth feel. This is what he does best—he captures emotions and even thoughts—through the subtleties of facial expression and body language. What are the details which show Aunt Ella's determination and how she and Nell work together?

### Notice and Wonder...

- Is the setting in the city or country?
- Does the painting depict a scene from today or from the past? How do you know?
- Notice the sunlight washes over Aunt Ella, her niece, and their majestic white horse as they make their way to town to buy fabric to make a special dress.
- Notice the ears and tail on Aunt Ella's horse. What position are they in?
- What do Nell's ears and tail tell us about what is happening in this picture?
- Look at Aunt Ella's expression and posture. What does it tell us? How does Rockwell show Aunt Ella's determination and strength?
- What is the expression on Liz'beth's face? Is she happy to be on this adventure? How do you know?

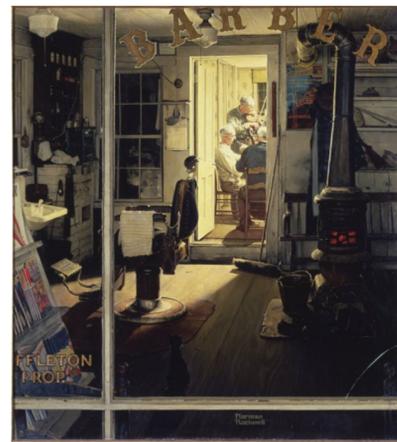
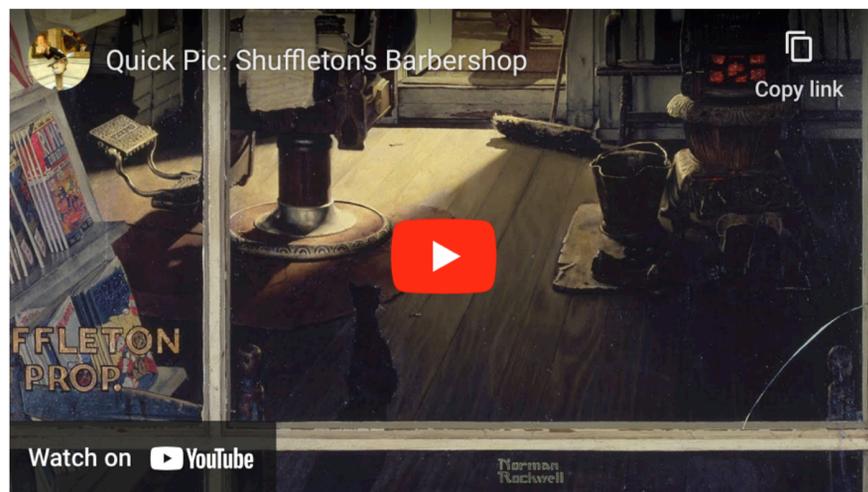
### Fun Facts...

- Norman Rockwell created this painting for a 1942 story by Marcelene Cox. In the story Aunt Ella does not have children herself, but is determined to see that her niece Mary gets the beautiful dress that her parents cannot afford for her graduation.
- Aunt Ella and Mary's sister Liz'beth in a horse and buggy, are going to town to sell some grain to buy fabric for the new dress. Rockwell illustrates their return home, after which they will wipe down Nell the horse in her stall, and begin work on the dress. Can you find the package that holds the fabric for Mary's dress?
- "Aunt Ella was beautiful in my eyes. You knew, somehow, that she had grown up on sunshine and good times. She had just the right plumpness, with dimples in her elbows and cheeks, a clear, pink complexion and auburn hair."
- Though he normally used neighbors and friends as models, the child actor Joan Carroll, who appeared in many films, was the model for this painting.

### What can you do?

- Think about Aunt Ella and how her determination, and connection with her horse, helped her to be confident going to town on her own to do something special for her niece. Think about what you are determined to do today to help someone else. If you have a dog, cat or other animal tell them your plan. And then, try something that is not easy to do. Be Aunt Ella!

## Shuffleton's Barber Shop (1950)



Norman Rockwell (1894 - 1978)  
*Shuffleton's Barbershop*, 1950  
Cover illustration for *The Saturday Evening Post*,  
April 29, 1950  
Oil on canvas  
Collection of The Lucas Museum of Narrative Art  
© 1950 SEPS: Curtis Publishing, Indianapolis, IN.

### Big Idea

The cat in this picture is very attentive and an important part of the everyday life of the Barber Shops. She seems to be enjoying the sounds of music coming from the back room in just the way any human would. Are there animals in your community that you see regularly and who are part of the fabric of your day? Do you have neighbors who walk dogs? A favorite squirrel who runs up trees near your home?

### Notice and Wonder...

- Find the cat in the picture. What is she doing?
- What details tell us that this is a barbershop?
- Is the shop open, or closed, and how do you know? Even though it's an indoor scene, can you tell what time of year it might be and what the weather is like outside? The glowing stove and boots around it might give you a hint.
- Rockwell's greatest challenge in this picture was creating the window through which we view the scene. He places us outside on the street, where we can look into the barber shop and imagine the sounds from within.
- What details give the illusion of looking through a glass window?

### Fun Facts...

- Norman Rockwell painted this scene of his hometown barbershop while living in rural Arlington, Vermont. He posed the shop's owner, Rob Shuffleton, as the fiddler in the back room. Shuffleton was an avid fisherman, and Rockwell provides clues to this fact with the inclusion of his fishing gear - can you find it in the picture?
- Interestingly, the curious cat is the only "person" in the picture other than the musicians playing in the backroom.
- Rockwell and his three sons all had their hair cut at Shuffleton's Barbershop in Vermont. Peter, his youngest child and an artist himself, enjoyed reading comic books from the rack seen on the lower left corner of the picture. He was disappointed when his name was called because that meant he might not be able to finish the comic book that he was reading.
- There is an old hotel in Stockbridge, MA just across the street from where Rockwell and his wife Molly lived for many years. The hotel's name is the Red Lion Inn, and a cat lives there. He loves to sit by the fireplace in the front lobby, and his name is Norman.

### What can you do?

- Take a look outside and see if you can spy any animals? What are they doing and what traits do they have? Are they feathery, furry, or smooth? Draw a picture of the animal you saw, or create one from your imagination!

## Breaking Home Ties (1954)



Norman Rockwell (1894 – 1978)  
*Breaking Home Ties*, 1954  
Cover illustration for *The Saturday Evening Post*,  
September 25, 1954  
Oil on canvas  
©1954 SEPS: Curtis Publishing, Indianapolis, IN.

DOWNLOAD

Pets often help us notice and understand our emotions.

There are certain rites of passage which take place in every family. In this image a boy is saying goodbye to his father and dog as he prepares to leave home for college. What emotion does the collie dog seem to be expressing?

### Notice and Wonder...

- What story does this illustration tell? What are the clues?
- Is there one character in the painting that is expressing his emotions even though he doesn't speak? (The dog!)
- Where does the dog rest his head, and where is he looking?
- This father and son are waiting for a train. Who might be leaving, and where might he be going? The differences in their clothing might offer a clue.
- Have you noticed how dogs seem to express emotions, from joy to sadness and everything in between?
- To bring humor and color into the picture, Rockwell put fun socks and a tie on the young man. Notice how he used the color red to frame the action.

### Fun Facts...

- Norman Rockwell painted *Breaking Home Ties* at a time when his three sons were living away from home. He painted *Breaking Home Ties* to work through his own feelings of loss and separation as his boys moved away from home to go to school.
- Norman Rockwell wrote, "That year my three boys had gone away and I'd had an empty feeling; it took me a while to adjust without them. This poignancy was what I wanted to get across in the picture. But there was humor in it too. I put a funny kind of suit on the boy because he was a ranch boy leaving home for the first time. And his father was holding two hats, one the boy's beat-up old rancher's hat and the other his brand-new hat. The boy was carrying his lunch all done up in pink ribbon. I drew a collie dog with his head on the boy's lap." The father couldn't fully express his emotions but the dog could. The dog and father seem to have a shared feeling, while the young man is looking off into the distance and his future.
- Experimenting with different ideas, Rockwell chose the running board of an old truck over a railroad station bench to include in his setting. In Rockwell's story, the boy and his family live in the country on a ranch, and must flag the train down with a flag and lantern to get it to stop.
- Rockwell received most of his fan letters for this picture about the dog.

### What can you do?

- Take time to notice the emotions of animals in your life. If you have a pet, are there times you notice when it is sad, happy, mad? If you don't have a pet, look around where you live for animals. Are there squirrels or pigeons or chipmunks nearby which express themselves in different ways?
- What do you notice?
- How do the animals around you make your day a little brighter? Do something kind for an animal in your home or living in your neighborhood.

## Painting Hey Fellers Come on In! (1920)



Norman Rockwell (1894 - 1978)  
*Hey Fellers, Come On In!*, 1920  
Cover illustration for *The Country Gentleman*, June 19, 1920  
Oil on canvas  
Norman Rockwell Museum Collection,  
NRM.1985.04

DOWNLOAD

The dog in this painting is part of the family. The boys and dog invite us to join in the fun and adventure. Is it your sense that the dog is leading the adventure or happy to keep up? How do you know?

### Notice and Wonder...

- What's happening in this picture? It looks like these boys are having a wonderful time swimming, but what about the dog? By his expression, do you think the dog is enjoying the experience?
- This painting was one of thirty-nine cover illustrations for *Country Gentleman*, a magazine that Rockwell worked for as a young man from 1917 to 1922.
- Painting what he knew best, and Rockwell's subject for the majority of his early covers was the pastimes and antics of energetic boys. In *Hey Fellers, Come On In!* Rockwell expresses his love of country life.
- The theme of swimming where a "No Trespassing" sign is posted recurs in other paintings throughout Rockwell's career. He was a prankster as a boy himself and did not seem to mind minor rule-breaking and practical jokes as long as they were in good fun.
- Notice that the boy's hand and drops of water extend outside of the picture border. This helped Rockwell emphasize his gesture of inviting onlookers to join.
- Does the painting give you the feeling that you would like to jump into the water if you could?

### Fun Facts...

- Norman Rockwell was born and grew up in New York City, but as a boy, his family spent vacation time at farms in upstate New York and on Long Island.
- Rockwell preferred the country to the city and eventually made a move with his own family to rural Arlington, Vermont, in 1939.
- He loved dogs and usually had a dog as a grown up. He often included them in his pictures.
- Do you think it would be difficult to pose a dog, or any other animal? Rockwell often photographed them because it was hard to make them stay still.
- Rockwell and his family had pets and the family especially loved their dogs.

### What can you do?

- Choose a pet or animal in your neighborhood and write a letter as if you were that animal. What are you thinking and feeling? What do you wish for?











**Hey Fellers  
Come On In!**

**Norman  
Rockwell**

# 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

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.L.1

Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.L.2

Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.L.3

Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.L.4

Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.L.5

Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.L.6

Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when encountering an unknown term important to comprehension or expression.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.1

Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.2

Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.3

Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.4

Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.5

Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.SL.6

Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.