

# Portraits

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Instructional Plan Team



Portraits is a language arts unit which teaches the writing process. The unit will introduce students to the self-portraits of Rembrandt and Norman Rockwell. Students will create their own self-portraits through art mediums and autobiographical sketches. Students will continue to practice appropriate writing strategies as they research the lives of the artists, write in their journal, and write a story about one of the artist's paintings.

**Keywords:** self-portraits; Rembrandt; Norman Rockwell; get acquainted;

**Grade Level:** Third grade

**Appropriate Group Size:** Whole Class

**Time Expected to Complete Instructional Plan:** Two to three weeks

**Instructional Objectives:**

**Students will:**

1. be introduced to the self-portraits of Rembrandt and Norman Rockwell leading to a discussion of what is a portrait.
2. visually present their self-portraits using a variety of mediums as art is integrated into the media center and the classroom.
3. write an autobiographical sketch as it relates to their self-portrait.
4. share their portraits with classmates as a means of establishing a rapport for the classroom culture.
5. write a response to a Norman Rockwell print. (preparation for Indiana State Testing for Educational Progress – ISTEP).
6. use strategies to read for meaning in books and articles of selected artists both orally and silently in the classroom and media center.

7. explore art through technology in the media center using laser discs, videos, and the Internet.
8. use the digital camera to photograph themselves and their self-portraits which will be written on a compact disc format and then imported into a PowerPoint presentation to be shared with parents, students at our home school as well as our distant learning partners in Los Angeles, and the community at large.
9. research and write about selected artists in the media center and classroom.
10. have their works of art displayed throughout the school and community becoming “*Artists in Residence.*”

## Indiana State Proficiencies:

### Language Arts Grade 3

1. Exhibit a positive attitude toward language and learning through selecting reading materials from classroom libraries and school library media centers; writing for personal satisfaction.
2. Select and apply effective strategies for reading, including establishing purposes for reading; making comparisons and predictions; drawing conclusions; using picture cues.
3. Comprehend developmentally appropriate materials, including informational materials, student writing, audio-visual media, and reference materials.
4. Select and use developmentally appropriate strategies for writing using the writing process;
5. Write for different purposes and audiences producing a variety of forms, including personal narratives.
6. Use prior knowledge and content area information to make critical judgements, including making inferences from what they read and hear.
7. Communicate orally with people of all ages by contributing to class discussions.
8. Recognize the interrelatedness of language, literature, and culture by understanding the elements of story structure—theme, characters, setting, and plot, comparing literature and arts from different cultures.

**Visual Arts Proficiencies:** All third grade visual art proficiencies are provided in this unit.

## Materials and Resources:

1. Images from image databases
2. Books, videos, and laserdiscs from our own media center
3. Prints representing each of the artists featured in this unit
4. Mirrors

### Images from Image Databases

1. Norman Rockwell  
*Triple Portrait*  
Norman Rockwell Museum of Vermont
2. Norman Rockwell  
*Lincoln for the Defense*  
Norman Rockwell Museum of Vermont
3. Norman Rockwell  
*Choosin Up*  
Norman Rockwell Museum of Vermont
4. Jane Boyd

*Vision and Tradition*

A mural at South Gate Park, in a parking lot on Pinehurst Avenue in southern California

*Painting the Towns: Murals of California* by Robin J Dunitz

Mural Art in California

5. Norman Rockwell  
*And Now the Fighting Fourth Artist Norman Rockwell Poster*  
Corbis Images--NA015695
6. Norman Rockwell  
*Portrait of Famed American Artist Norman Rockwell*  
Corbis Images--W1609
7. Rembrandt  
*Rembrandt's Self-Portrait*  
Corbis Images--IH020164
8. Rembrandt  
*Portrait of an Old Man*  
Corbis Images--AV003015
9. John Singer Sargent  
*The Oyster Gathers of Cancale*  
Corbis Images--MA09285A
10. John Singer Sargent  
*Self-Portrait*  
Corbis Images--MA09284A
11. John Singer Sargent  
*The Daughters of Edward D. Boit*  
Corbis Images--MA09287A
12. *Mural of Harvesters and Oranges Inside Coit Tower*  
Corbis Images--CU003627
13. *CA-Los Angeles*  
Corbis Images--54945
14. *Crack the Whip*  
Corbis Images--MAO1099A

**Websites:**

- [Grove Dictionary of Art:](#)
- [Corbis](#)
- [Norman Rockwell Museum of Vermont](#)
- [Mural Art in California](#)
- [Getty Museum](#)

**Resources:****Books:**

- *Visit to an Art Museum* by Laurene Brown
- *Rembrandt* by Mike Venezia
- *What Makes a Rembrandt a Rembrandt* by Richard Muhlberger
- *Rembrandt and Seventeenth-Century Holland* by Claudio Pescia
- *Rembrandt* by Michael Kitson
- *Rembrandt* by Gladys Schmitt
- *Birthdays!: Celebrating Life Around the World* by Eve Feldman

- *Portraits* by Penny King
- *Lives of the Artists: Masterpieces, Messes (and what the Neighbors Thought)* by Kathleen Krull
- *Norman Rockwell Artist and Illustrator* by Thomas Buechner
- *Norman Rockwell Illustrator* by Arthur Guphill
- *Norman Rockwell Storybook* by Jan Wahl

**Laserdiscs:**

- *National Gallery of Art*
- *Louvre*

**CD-ROMs:**

- *ArtRageous*
- *Louvre*

**Videos:**

- *Once There Was A Tree* (Reading Rainbow)
- *Borreguita and the Coyote* (Reading Rainbow)
- *Norman Rockwell-An American Portrait*

**Featured Prints for This Unit:**

- *Choosin Up* (Norman Rockwell) Norman Rockwell Museum
- *Triple Portrait* (Norman Rockwell) Norman Rockwell Museum
- *Vision and Tradition Mural* (Jane Boyd) MuralArt Website

**Preparation:**

The teacher will need to acquire background information on the featured artists to be able to introduce this unit of study. Also, the structure of the I.S.T.E.P. writing sample needs to be reviewed to model good writing practices with the students. Quite simply, a teacher's enthusiasm for the potential art has to enrich existing curriculum is key to the success of this unit.

**Student Instructions:**

1. After looking at self-portraits of Rembrandt and Norman Rockwell, ask students to share ideas about what is a portrait.
2. Invite students to compare and contrast the two portraits. Ask questions such as:
  - look carefully at each work and describe what you see
  - what can you tell about each person and the period he lived
3. Encourage students to listen to books about the artists and provide books to choose from to read during self-selected reading time.
4. Discuss research strategies in the classroom and the media center to gather data on Rembrandt and Rockwell.
5. Write research notes into paragraph form and place in the "Artist Portfolio" to be added to as future artists are discussed.
6. Have students draw a portrait of a sixth grade "Partner in Art." Explain the basic steps in drawing a face

or ask an art teacher to help with this part of the activity.

7. Encourage students to draw and paint their own self-portrait using mirrors as a guide or from the children's own sense of how they appear to others using portrait techniques acquired in a mini-lesson provided by the art teacher.
8. Have each student write an autobiographical sketch to accompany the self-portrait.
9. Challenge students to write a poem to go with their self-portraits. Title the poem "I Celebrate Myself." For examples, go to: <http://www.ulib.iupui.edu/imls/tparticipants.html>
10. Share paintings and text as a means to establish a good rapport among each other contributing to a positive classroom culture.
11. With parental help, transfer their self-portraits onto a T-shirt to be worn at Open House.
12. Use the digital camera to take pictures of the self-portraits and the student artists.
13. Import the autobiographical text with the digital images for a PowerPoint presentation to run continually at Open House in the classroom and the media center.
14. Display their work throughout the school, administrative offices, public library, and town hall as "*Artists in Residence*."
15. Search the Internet for Norman Rockwell's official web page and view other paintings by this artist and information about him.
16. Discuss the structure of a story (beginning, middle, and end) as the teacher models a pre-writing activity based on a Norman Rockwell print. Tell the students to study the print. Ask questions such as:
  - o What is going on in the picture
  - o What can we say about the person or people?
  - o Where is the activity taking place?
  - o What can you tell about the place?
  - o What do you think happened before the activity in the picture?
  - o What do you think will happen next?
17. Expand the pre-writing activity into a story.
18. Review punctuation rules for writing.
19. Look at the Rockwell print, "*Choosin Up*," and practice a pre-writing activity followed by a story explaining what they think the picture is about in preparation for Indiana State Testing (I.S.T.E.P.)

### **Student Assessment:**

1. Writing activities will be graded holistically using a rubric.
2. Comprehension will be evaluated by the body of research accumulated and through discussion.
3. Oral presentations of self-portraits and autobiographical sketches will be evaluated based on criteria established such as: posture, voice volume, clarity of material presented, etc.
4. Appreciation and enthusiasm for art and its role in the world will be informally evaluated using anecdotal records.

### **Expansion of Instructional Plan:**

1. Self-portraits are common among many artists and could be shared.
2. Children could look at Rembrandt's "*Artist in a Studio*" and brainstorm what they think is on the easel standing before Rembrandt yet hidden from their view.
3. Discussion of the possibility that the canvas on the easel is blank could lead to a writing activity based on the idea that the students' slates are clean, their canvas is ready for them to color/paint. What will their lives/canvases look like?
4. Artists' portraits of their families could be shared leading to a study of each child's family history.

### **Family Activities:**

1. Invite parents into the classroom to assist with the T-shirts.
2. Ask parents to assist in cutting mats and framing self-portraits for display as “*Artists in Residence.*”
3. Have students interview their parents to discover how their name was chosen and share other interesting aspects of their family’s history.
4. Ask a parent or school volunteer to make berets for the students to wear as they create their self-portraits and other paintings.

**Teacher Notes:**

It is important to stress that every child will have different levels of artistic ability but that all artistic attempts will be celebrated for their individuality and effort.