

# Norman Rockwell: Then and Now

By  
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**Keywords:** Norman Rockwell, realism, idealism, narrative, compare and contrast of modern pieces and themes.

**Curriculum Area:** Art

**Grade level:** 7th and 8th

**Appropriate Group Size:** Whole class

**Time Expected to complete Instructional Plan:** One Week

## Instructional Objectives:

Students will:

1. be introduced to work of Norman Rockwell leading to a discussion of how his work is narrative and describing a ideal way of life.
2. touch on issues of Art Aesthetics in discussing if Norman Rockwell was seen as an Artist or an Illustrator.
3. select a piece and write their own narrative relating to that work integrating Language Arts into the art classroom.
4. well explore art through technology in the media center using the Internet.
5. search the Internet to find a modern piece of art that has a similar theme or can be related to one of Norman Rockwell's pieces,(i.e. sports theme).
6. write a compare and contrast summary analyzing the two pieces and how the artist uses different functions and tools to achieve their work. (Preparation for ISTEP).
7. distinguish how the ideals of life have changed over the years and how media and how business have changed the look of modern art and photography today. This integrates American History and social cultures into the art classroom.
8. produce a drawing or illustration based on the theme that was compared and contrasted. The work is using the student's own version of how the topic should be portrayed.
9. have their work displayed throughout the school.
10. practice documentation of work.

## Indiana State Standards:

Visual Art Grade 7 & 8

State Reference Number:

1. Understand the significance of visual art in relation to historical, social, political, spiritual, environmental, technological, and economic issues.
2. Recognize significant works of Western and non-Western art and understand the chronological development of art movements.
3. Describe, analyze and interpret works of art and artifacts.
4. Identify and apply criteria to make informed judgments about art.
5. Reflect on and discuss philosophical theories and aesthetic issues concerning the meaning and significance of art.

6. Theorize about art and make informed judgments.
7. Observe, select and utilize a range of subject matter, symbols and ideas in their work.
8. Understand and apply elements and principles of design effectively in their work.
9. Develop and apply skills using a variety of two dimensional and three dimensional media, tools, and processes to create works that communicate personal meaning.
10. Reflect on, revise, and refine work using problem solving and critical thinking skills.
11. Understand how art experiences affect daily life and identify opportunities for involvement in the arts.
12. Identify and make connections between knowledge and skill in art and all other subject areas such as humanities, sciences, and technology

### **Materials and Resources:**

1. Images from image database, Internet.
2. Books
3. Video
4. Drawing materials
5. CD ROM
6. Magazines

### **Web Sites:**

<http://www.millerhavens.com>  
<http://www.normanrockwellvt.com>  
<http://www.leroyneiman.com>  
<http://www.sportsartusa.com>  
<http://pages.hotbot.com/arts/washingtonorr/portraits.html>  
<http://www.tonycapp.com>  
<http://mailmanagement.com/Drake/>  
<http://www.bobpack.com>  
<http://www.sightphoto.com> (Joe Traver, photojournalists -sports)  
<http://www.rodkaye.com> (surreal)  
<http://www.images.corbis.com>

### **Books:**

1. The Norman Rockwell Storybook by Jan Wahl
2. Norman Rockwell by Deanne Durrett
3. Leroy Neiman an American In Paris by Harry N. Abrams
4. Big Time Golf by Harry N. Abrams

### **Video:**

Norman Rockwell's World: An American Dream. Public Media, Home Vision, 1987.

### **CD ROM:**

Art and History: The Twentieth Century

**Magazines:** *Sports Illustrated* (any issue)

### **Featured Prints for this Unit:**

1. *Batter Up* (Norman Rockwell) <http://.normanrockwellvt.com>
2. *Sports* (Norman Rockwell) <http://.normanrockwellvt.com>
3. *The Big Game* (Norman Rockwell) <http://.normanrockwellvt.com>
4. *Basketball* (Norman Rockwell) <http://.normanrockwellvt.com>
5. *The Last Fly* (Norman Rockwell) <http://.normanrockwellvt.com>
6. *5,001* (Norman Rockwell) <http://.normanrockwellvt.com>

### **Museum Resource:**

The Eiteljorg Museum is a good resource to use as transition from this unit into a unit based on Remington. Just as Rockwell's work expresses an idealistic view of life, the work of Remington expresses an idealistic view of the West.

**Preparation:** The teacher needs to research and gather information on Norman Rockwell's work, as well as his philosophies and ideas behind his work. The teacher also needs to find examples of modern work that have connecting themes with Norman Rockwell's work. The connecting theme in this unit is sports, a theme that middle school students can relate to in their daily lives. The art teacher also needs to research the proper prewriting strategies used in the Language Art departments. The teacher will also work with the media specialist to make the most efficient use of technology with the students in the media center.

### **Strategies and Activities:**

1. Students will discuss the work of Norman Rockwell and point out common characteristics that reoccur within the pieces. (i.e. the interaction of characters, the narrative approach, the idealistic view of life.)
2. Students will touch on Aesthetic issues and form opinions on whether Norman Rockwell is seen as illustrator or an artist.
3. Students will review prewriting strategies.
4. Students will choose from one of Rockwell's prints studied and write a short story that narrates the scene being portrayed. (i.e. telling the story from one of the character's viewpoint).
5. Students will see how the themes used in Rockwell's prints can be related to themes shown in art today by looking at modern prints and photographs.
6. In discussion, students will compare and contrast how time and circumstances can change how differently images and functions of art appear in a piece of artwork.
7. Students will review the Internet use and research procedures in the media center.
8. Students will be given a list of web sites to search from. From these sites, students will choose a fine art piece or piece of photography that they can use to compare and contrast to one the selected Rockwell pieces.
9. Analyzing the Rockwell piece and the chosen modern piece, the students will write a compare and contrast summary of the two pieces. Students will look for connections with theme and distinguish differences in how ideals of life have changed over the years and how media and commercial business have changed the look of modern art today.
10. To conclude their study, students will create a drawing or illustration using the related theme of their compare and contrast summary. Students will create their own version of how they perceive the theme.
11. The student's story, compare and contrast summary, and drawing will be displayed together as one piece.

### **Student Assessment:**

1. A rubric will be used for the story and the compare and contrast summaries writing activities. (Rubric-see attachment)
2. Comprehension and understanding will be measured by the research gathered and the participation in discussion.
3. Drawings will be graded with the current project grading criteria used by the art teacher.

**Expansion of Instructional Plan:**

Rockwell's work expresses an idealistic view of life. In the same way, Remington also expresses an idealistic way of life in the West. Studying the work of Remington can lead to many narrative writing activities as well as narrative pieces of art.

**Family Activities:**

Students can interview parents and grandparents and ask them how sports were viewed when they were their age, what sports they played, and what events in history have occurred to change how sports have been used.

**Teacher note:**

Before any discussion of a work of art, the teacher should plan out question and points of interest that need to be pointed out to keep the discussion flowing. At this age level it is important to think of the interests of the students and think of ways how the material relates to them.

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**RUBRIC FOR SHORT STORY**

	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Poor</b>
Provides an introduction, body, and conclusion, with strong topic sentence	50	40	30	20
Is focused and well organized	50	40	30	20
Is free of errors in grammar, punctuation, word choice, and spelling	50	40	30	20
Displays originality and creativity	50	40	30	20

**RUBRIC FOR CONTRAST AND COMPARISON PAPER**

	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Poor</b>
<u>Ideas and Content</u>		
--stays completely focused on topic and task	6	0
--includes thorough and complete ideas	5 4 3 2 1	0
--supports both contrast and comparison ideas		
<u>Organization</u>		
--organizes ideas logically	6	0
--uses a specific order to present ideas and information	5 4 3 2 1	0
<u>Style</u>		
--exhibits exceptional work usage	6	0
--demonstrates exceptional writing technique	5 4 3 2 1	0
--uses a variety of types of sentence structure		
<u>Grammar</u>		
--free of errors in grammar, punctuation, word choice, and spelling	6	0

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## MUSEUM VISIT

The Museum that I visited was the Eiteljorg Museum. The visit was not only enjoyable but also very insightful in the way it showed me various opportunities for instructional planning. I found it to be an effective way to be used as transitional tool from the Norman Rockwell lesson that I have planned to a lesson on Native American art.

The Norman Rockwell lesson emphasizes on an idealistic view of American life. This idealistic view was often dramatized and yet easily understood by the general public. This can be connected very easily to the work found in the Eiteljorg Museum by Remington. In his paintings, Remington also expresses an idealistic view of life, his version of the Native American way of life. This work also tends to lack complete accuracy of true Native American way of living but can be understood by those outside of the West and especially of those who dreamt of the West.

Remington's work is good to look at first, not only for its tie with Norman Rockwell work but it is also good to be used as a warm up for the work done by the Native Americans. It is interesting to see the contrasts between the works. The Native American work is not only beautiful to look at and appreciate but it is also very educational. The pieces tell a lot about differences between tribes. They teach about their spiritual beliefs and customs. They tell us about their land, their clothes, their homes, their food, and daily routines. They teach us about their view of the White Man and their perception of their way of life.

Also in the visit, was a tour through many of the Native American artifacts. This is a great cross-disciplinary with art and history. It reinforces the emphasis on the view and perspective of a peoples' way of life. The last part of the tour was to actually speak with one the visiting Native American artist as she worked on her pieces. Interviewing the artist was a great first hand experience of witnessing Native American way of living.

I think that this museum can touch on many of the disciplines. So much culture can be gained from the experience as well as the opportunity to see some wonderful works of art. I definitely see a trip to the Eiteljorg Museum as a must in my instructional plan.

## TEACHER SUMMATIVE EVALUATION

1. Have your reactions, attitude, feelings changed since last summer regarding the use if visual databases in regular classroom instruction and Corbis and Grove in particular?

A: My feelings towards using a visual database in the classroom have changed a great deal. First of all, I now feel more comfortable sitting at the computer. I feel a sense of direction and opportunity and not so intimidated and bewildered by the piece of technology. This should also save me time knowing exactly where I can look instead of searching aimlessly for hours. It is motivating.

2. How has this project changed the way you teach?

A: I feel I can cover material more thoroughly and reach those students who rely more on visual understanding.

3. What impact has the project changed the way you teach?

A: In the art classroom, students learn that art is not just an activity that is done in my classroom. It shows them that art is everywhere and can be created and applied in their everyday lives.

4. What has been the reactions of students regarding your project?

A: I have seen a positive reaction from students. Students who may not be artistically talented can still master artistic understanding through the use of technology.

5. What did the students like best about your project?

A: What the students liked best about the project was being able to tie in their own interests and likes through the use of technology and art.

6. Please describe briefly, cross-disciplinary instructional uses of images you used other than just with your student project.

A: An example of cross-disciplinary instructional use of images is the use of works done by M.C. Escher. Many of his Plane Tessellation pieces can be studied in art as well as in math where Tessellation theories are studied.

7. Please describe challenges/barriers (specific and/or general) to integrating digital images into instructional activities.

A: Some challenges can occur when wanting students to use the technology. Factors that come into play are the number of computers accessible to cater to the number of students. Another factor is whether or not there is if enough time to use the technology by the students in an effective and educational manner.

8. Please compare the digital resources used. Benefits of Each? Disadvantages/ difficulties of each?

A: Corbis is nice for quick direct use. It can fulfill a visual need for general topics swift and effectively. It also has a nice selection. The only disadvantage it may have is if it is lacking a specific piece you need. Grove is nice for extensive research. The disadvantage may be the time needed to do the research.

9. What strengths and weaknesses did you have with your project?

A: The strengths to this project were students finding links with their interests and art through the use of technology. The only disadvantage is lack of time to accomplish every activity planned.

10. What have you learned through this project?

A: I have learned that it is important for students to see how they can enhance their creativity and artistic understanding not only by hands on projects but also through technology. This application is so important since technology is becoming such a vital tool in every day living.

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## ARTICLE SUMMARY

Sylwester, Robert. "Art for the Brain's Sake." Educational Leadership. November 1998. p. 31-35.

This article primarily argues the issue of cutting art educational programs. The increase in school efficiency and economy, as well as the demanding concern of measurable standards has become the cause. The author questions how something that has played such an important cultural role throughout

human history can no longer be justified in today's educational process.

The basic argument of the author is that the arts play an important role in brain development and maintenance. They involve many elements of human life, primarily performance, or heightened motor skills, and aesthetics, which is the heightened appreciation of the sensory-motor skills. Mobility is way of human life, whether it be movement of information mentally or physically. The motor system consists of very complex brain-muscular connections. The author argues how curriculum can be cut that will reduce the development of such complex systems and prevent them for what they are intended to do.

It is also argued that by cutting the funds may also cut the opportunities for students to learn what is crucial to them, such as language. The neural system that is used when learning language goes hand in hand with the neural system that enables one to process musical forms. Both systems must be developmentally stimulated. Depriving a curriculum of music may limit one's potential with language.

Another issue to consider is a child's self esteem and self-concept. Naturally, students perform and basically live a little easier when they have self- assurance. Serotonin is a neurotransmitter which enables one to have smooth movements. Smooth movements usually enhance self-concept; therefore, increasing the level of Serotonin can increase self-esteem.

Finally, the author sums the argument by restating the importance of motion and connecting it to the importance of emotion. Through the arts, emotion can be expressed and developed with motion. Both are central factors of life. Denying children the opportunities to develop motion and emotion is denying them a part of life.

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