

19-A Freedom of Speech, *The Saturday Evening Post*, 1943

Norman Rockwell (1894–1978)



19-A Norman Rockwell (1894–1978), *Freedom of Speech* (*The Saturday Evening Post* 1943). Oil on canvas, 45 3/4 x 35 1/2 in. (116.205 x 90.170 cm.). The Norman Rockwell Art Collection Trust, Norman Rockwell Museum, Stockbridge, Mass. www.nrm.org. Printed by permission of the Norman Rockwell Family Agency. Copyright © 1943 Norman Rockwell Family Entities.

The Art

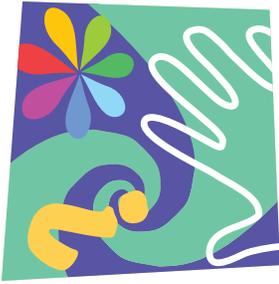
The people sitting around the man are looking up to him and listening to him speak at a town meeting. Against the dark background, the speaker looks light, making him stand out in the picture.

The Artist

Norman Rockwell is a special type of artist called an illustrator. Many Americans recognized Rockwell's style and works through reading *The Saturday Evening Post*, a magazine that Rockwell worked for. Rockwell wanted to be known not only as a successful illustrator, but also as a talented artist. He believed the series of illustrations called the *Four Freedoms* would help him reach this goal, but he also knew it would not be easy. Illustrators were considered different from other artists. However, Rockwell believed his art had the same moving effect on people as other types of art.

The Historical Perspective

Rockwell created this *Freedom of Speech* painting as one of four artworks that shows the four main freedoms addressed in a 1941 State of the Union speech by then President Franklin D. Roosevelt. They were freedom of speech and expression, freedom from fear, freedom from want, and freedom of worship. Rockwell's *Four Freedoms* paintings made many Americans think about these freedoms and value them. From the time the *Four Freedoms* were published in *The Saturday Evening Post* through their national tour and into the present day, the messages of freedom remain strong in our country, as does the appreciation of Rockwell's talent as an American artist.



Conversations and Teaching Activities

Head Start Children ages 3 to 5

Encourage children to look closely at this painting—the objects, the background, the way it is painted and the colors used. Ask questions, introduce new vocabulary, and identify books that relate to the themes in the painting.

Describing



- ✓ What do you see? What are the people in the painting doing? Children might say some people/men are looking, one man is standing.
- ✓ Why do you think these people are together? Where do you think they are?
- ✓ Do you see the woman? What is she wearing?
- ✓ Do you see something in the man's pocket? What do you think it might be? Why do you think that? If one child points out it's "a paper" or newspaper, have other children look more closely at that. Then ask why he would have this paper in his pocket. What might be on the paper?

Analyzing and Interpreting



Ask the following questions to stimulate thinking and discussion:

Where are some places we can find people together in groups? Children might say church, school, in front of stores, at a meeting, etc.

- Why do you think these people are looking up at the man?
- Talk about "rules" for one person talking at a time. What does it mean to interrupt someone?
- Go back to the name of the painting and talk with the children about the word/concept "freedom." What do they think it means? Relate that to the more specific "freedom of speech," as in the title. Older children might be able to express what "freedom of speech" means.
- Are there other things you'd like to tell me about this painting?

Connecting and Extending

Introducing Vocabulary

agreement	magazine
attention	newspaper
freedom	opinion
illustrate	serious
illustrator	speech
inspire	
interrupt	



Books

Fairytale News by Colin and Jacqui Hawkins (Candlewick Press, 2004)
Familiar fairy tales are told in the style of newspaper articles.

Squirrel Park by Lisa Campbell Ernst (Bradbury Press/Maxwell Macmillan International, 1993)

A young boy and a squirrel try to save an old tree in the center of town that is threatened by a plan for a new park.

Books continued on page 118

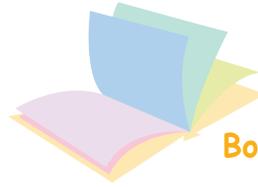


Connecting and Extending continued...

Related Family Literacy Experiences

Parents and children can:

- ✓ discuss past situations that seemed unfair. Using puppets and/or dolls, they can reenact the situation, take turns playing different roles, and create different outcomes.
- ✓ create “house” rules for the family to follow.
- ✓ research someone in their community who is doing something to make things better for everyone and write him or her a letter of support.



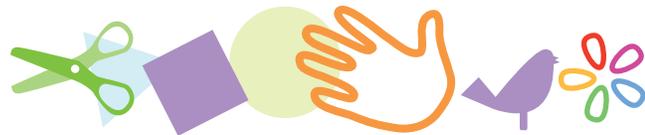
Books continued...

The Furry News: How to Make a Newspaper by Loreen Leedy (Holiday House, 1990)

Big Bear and other animals write, edit, and print their own newspaper, *The Furry News*. The book includes tips for creating a newspaper and defines a number of newspaper terms.

The Paperboy: Story and Paintings by Dav Pilkey (Orchard Books, 1996)

A newspaper boy and his dog deliver the early morning newspaper each day.



Related Educational Experiences

- ✓ Bring in a town newspaper or newsletter for the children to examine. Discuss how this might be important to the “freedom” represented in Rockwell’s painting.
- ✓ Have children share important class “news.” Write down their contributions on chart paper and post them. This is an example of communicating and sharing information in print.
- ✓ Talk with children about activities they are “free” to do. Have each child illustrate his or her favorite activity. Take story dictation about each child’s contribution. Make a class “freedom” book and put it in the library area to share with others.
- ✓ Help children understand that rules are designed to support individual freedoms. Discuss how this is so and create a set of classroom rules.

The ideas listed are just a few of the many activities that could be used to introduce or extend children’s learning. Your knowledge of your children and families supports your ability to ensure positive learning experiences and outcomes for students. As an educator, you probably have ideas for books, songs, finger plays, and activities that you have thought of when introducing or extending children’s learning related to the “A Head Start on Picturing America” artworks. We encourage you to confer with your colleagues, visit the local library or bookstore, and share your ideas with others.