
Art Masterpiece: *The Dugout,** by Norman Rockwell

Keywords: Illustrator/illustration, mood, Realism/Realistic

Grade(s): 3rd – 4th

Activity: Magazine cover illustration

*Nearly any of Rockwell's magazine cover illustrations may be used



“Without thinking too much about it in specific terms, I was showing the America I knew and observed to others who might not have noticed.” Norman Rockwell

About the Artist:

- Norman Rockwell was born in New York City in 1894.
- Rockwell always wanted to be an artist, although his mother never wanted him to pursue art as a career. She never thought that he would be able to make a living drawing but Rockwell said he never wanted to do anything else.
- Rockwell was a thin, uncoordinated boy who started wearing corrective shoes when he was 10 and glasses when he was 12. Because he was not able to compete in sports, he turned his attention to drawing. At age 14, he enrolled in art classes at The New York School of Art and two years later he left high school to study art at The National Academy of Design.
- Rockwell found success early. He painted his first commission of four Christmas cards before his sixteenth birthday. While still in his teens, he was hired as art director of *Boys' Life*, the official publication of the Boy Scouts of America, and began a successful freelance career illustrating a variety of young people's publications. Later in his life, Rockwell donated many pieces of art to the Boy Scouts and they currently have the largest collections of his work.
- In 1916, the 22-year-old Rockwell painted his first cover for *The Saturday Evening Post*, the magazine considered by Rockwell to be the “greatest show window in America.”

- Over the next 47 years, another 321 Rockwell covers would appear on the cover of the Post.
- Norman Rockwell was a prolific artist, producing more than four thousand original works in his lifetime. He once said, "I'll never have enough time to paint all the pictures I'd like to."
- Rockwell frequently used his neighbors and friends as models while he painted the everyday happenings surrounding him. Sometimes Rockwell would visualize a child in his mind for a portrait and then he would travel to different schools looking for the right person to model for him. He would pay kids a nickel to sit for hours while he would draw them.
- In 1943, he ended his 47-year career with the *Post* and began to work for *Look* magazine. During his ten years with *Look*, Rockwell's paintings included images of civil rights, space exploration and poverty.
- From 1952-1972, Rockwell was commissioned to paint the portrait of every major Presidential candidate.
- In 1977, Rockwell received the nation's highest civilian honor, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, for his "vivid and affectionate portraits of our country".
- Rockwell died in 1978 at the age of 84. He will always remain one of America's best-loved artists.

About the Artwork:

This painting by Norman Rockwell, *The Dugout*, appeared on the cover of *The Saturday Evening Post* published September 4, 1948, which was not a good year for baseball fans. Both the Cubs and the White Sox were in the cellars of their respective leagues. The Cubs had 64 wins and 90 losses. The fans in the bleachers entertained themselves by betting nickels on balls and strikes.

Original copies of this magazine cover can sell for over \$100 on eBay. And to think, the magazine only cost ten cents originally! The original painting was sold for \$345,000.00 in 1996. *The Dugout* is a watercolor on paper painting, 19" x 17.75," and it is currently part of the collection of The Brooklyn Museum.

Definitions:

Illustrator/Illustration: a person who draws or creates pictures for magazines, books, advertising, etc. Illustrations have been used in advertisements, architectural rendering, greeting cards, posters, books, graphic novels, storyboards, manuals, business, magazines, shirts greeting cards, video games, tutorials and newspapers. Rockwell himself said, "Some people have been kind enough to call me a fine artist. I've always called myself an illustrator."

I'm not sure what the difference is. All I know is that whatever type of work I do, I try to give it my very best. Art has been my life.”

Mood: a state of mind; emotion. In art, mood is expressed by color, subject, composition, and nearly every other element of the artwork.

Realism/Realistic: Realism (or naturalism) in the arts is the attempt to represent subject matter truthfully, without artificiality and avoiding artistic conventions. Realistic art attempts to re-create the colors, textures, shapes and arrangements of actual objects. Rockwell once said, “Right from the beginning, I always strived to capture everything I saw as completely as possible.”

Possible Questions:

1. The purpose of an illustration is to provide the viewer with information. Describe some of the details in *The Dugout*.
2. Who is the boy standing in front of the dugout? What is he thinking by the look on his face? How do you think he feels? (Mood.) What about the people behind him?
3. What story idea does the illustration show?
4. How does Rockwell help you guess the feelings of the players? The spectators? What do you think the spectators are saying? Who are they talking to?
5. Do the people look real? Why?

Activity: Realistic magazine cover illustration

Materials Needed:

- White drawing paper or construction paper*, 9” X 12”, one per student
- Colored pencils, one set per student
- Pencils (students will have their own)

*Use the “Saturday Evening Post” template at the end of this lesson, photocopied onto the drawing paper/construction paper. Ask for assistance from the front office staff or Admin Assistant when you do this.

Process:

1. Have the students think about a day in their life doing an everyday activity or a favorite activity. Some ideas might be playing a sports game, a birthday party, camping, going to the Ostrich Festival or an event at their school.
2. Pass out the papers and pencils. Remind students to write their names at the bottom of their papers, next to “Illustrator.”

3. Encourage students to first sketch lightly with their pencil, then fill in with the colored pencils.

Examples:



Parent Note:

Norman Rockwell (1894 – 1978) was a 20th-century American painter and illustrator. His works enjoy a broad popular appeal in the United States for their reflection of American culture. Rockwell is most famous for the cover illustrations of everyday life he created for *The Saturday Evening Post* magazine over nearly five decades.

Today in Art Masterpiece students illustrated a magazine cover of their own.



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