Everyday Easels

By Various Members of the Star Contributors Team
The unit for *After the Prom* was written by Julie Coney, Tammie Bairen, Rachel Ann Rogish, and Bonnie Rose Hudson

Don’t know where to start with art? *Everyday Easels* features a different work of art every two weeks, approaching it from many angles, including art, history, geography, writing, science, hands-on activities, and even physical education and health.

*After the Prom*

By Norman Rockwell

www.TheOldSchoolhouse.com

Bouquet of Fun
Norman Perceval Rockwell was born in New York City on February 3, 1894. He knew he always wanted to be an artist and began learning the technical skills to become an illustrator when he was just 14 years old. As a teenager, he was hired as an illustrator for *Boys’ Life*. He worked for several publications including *Life* and painted his first *The Saturday Evening Post* cover when he was 22 years of age. He then spent the next 47 years producing covers for this magazine. In 1963, Rockwell began working for *Look* and produced illustrations that dealt with civil rights, poverty, and space exploration.

Rockwell painted 321 covers for *The Saturday Evening Post*. Most of his illustrations depicted an ideal American life, but he also tackled political issues and significant moments in history like Charles Lindbergh’s crossing of the Atlantic in 1927. He portrayed Santa Claus many times, hobos, boys playing, physicians, children, painters, historical figures, musicians, young people in love, and many other scenes. A gallery of his illustrations spanning the decades can be found on *The Saturday Evening Post* website.

Rockwell is one of the world’s most famous illustrators. An illustrator draws or paints pictures for use in magazines and books. Sometimes these illustrations are used in advertising. He is no less an artist than, say, Van Gogh or Monet. The difference is that most of his work is used in widely circulated publications instead of hanging on a museum wall. This particular piece, *After the Prom*, was on the cover of the May 25, 1957, *Post*.

Can you find illustrations in any publications (magazines, books, newspapers) you may have around your house? Try to find drawings or paintings instead of photography or computer graphics. What are the subjects of each of these illustrations? If you are
permitted, cut these illustrations out and create a collage. Cut around the subject matter and then glue each to a piece of construction paper and give the entire collage a title.

Another project is to think like Norman Rockwell. Imagine something in life that is ideal. Perhaps it is a family tradition or vacation, perhaps it is riding your bike outside or swimming in a lake. It can be humorous or serious. Try drawing this with colored pencil.

**Bible**

When I look at the print *After the Prom* by Norman Rockwell, I smile. Looking at this sweet and tender scene fills me with a sense of hope—hope for a time that is gone and hope that things might be like this scene again. As I was thinking about those feelings of hope I was reminded of my ultimate hope—my hope in the Lord.

**The Bible has these things to say about hope:**

> Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord. Psa. 31:24 KJV

> I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope. Psa. 130:5 KJV

> By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Romans 5:2 KJV

> Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer. Romans 12:12 KJV

In the first two verses David is talking about his hope in the Lord. In the verses from Romans, Paul is sharing the hope we have in the risen Savior.
If you have a journal, choose one of the verses on hope that are listed above or use a concordance to help you look up another verse that talks about hope. Write your chosen verse artistically in your journal. Embellish the page with things that help you remember the hope of Christ.

**History**

*After the Prom* was the cover illustration for the May 25, 1957, edition of *The Saturday Evening Post*. It depicts one of the many delights of this decade, the soda fountain. Here we see a couple sitting at the counter while the soda jerk smells the young girl’s corsage. Don’t worry. “Soda jerk” isn’t a derogatory term. It is what the person who served the drinks and ice cream at the soda fountain was called in the 1950s. If the teens had ordered milkshakes, they would have likely only spent 25 cents on each one.

While at the prom, this couple probably would have danced to rock ‘n’ roll, which had its start in the early 1950s. Popular artists were Elvis Presley, Jerry Lee Lewis, and Chuck Berry. Teens were looking to create their own identity apart from the Big Band era of their parents. New dances were being invented such as the Stroll, Bop, Chalypso, Hully-Gully, Bunny Hop, and various forms of swing. In August 1957, just 2 1/2 months after this cover illustration went to press, *American Bandstand*, hosted by Dick Clark, was televised nationwide. Teens all across the country were then able to learn new dance moves for future dances.

Before they went to the prom that night, these teens may have watched television, which found its way into more homes during the 1950s than ever before. In the beginning of the 1950s, broadcasts were in black and white, but by the middle of the decade, color television sets were available. The sitcom came into existence. Popular shows were *The Honeymooners* and *I Love Lucy*. Soap operas like *The Guiding Light* began appearing on midday television and were an avenue for advertisers to reach women who remained at home during the day.
Large appliances became more prevalent, though they had been around for decades. Some refrigerators were now made with icemakers and automatic defrosters. Electric ovens and dishwashers were being used in homes with increasing frequency, though the dishwasher was considered a luxury item. The 1950s was a time when people were rapidly inventing things they thought could make life easier, things like hand-held mixers, toaster ovens, and ice crushers.

The teens in our picture most likely lived in the suburbs. After World War II ended in 1945, there was a great boom in the economy. People found that they could afford single-family homes. These were built outside of the city and became known as the suburbs. The school where their prom took place may have been an all-white school, but the Civil Rights Movement, which began in the ’50s, led to integration in all schools. Therefore, blacks and whites had equal access to quality education.

Many changes occurred during the 1950s. It is fun to go back in time and look at old magazines and watch old television shows to see how people lived, or at least how life was idealized. What are some things that have changed in the last 60 years? What things do we use now that weren’t around in the 1950s? Do you think things have changed for the better or worse?

Write a couple of journal entries from the perspective of one of the teens in the picture. You may need to do a little bit more research. Include some things that would have been new to him/her and how he/she feels about them. Talk about school or the dance. Talk about the kind of car he drives or the cost of different items in the ‘50s. Be creative and have fun!

**English**

“Very nice, Miss Hanes.” Walter drawled out her name as he always did in that funny mixture of respect and fondness. “Nice flower ya got there.”
Nancy simply smiled—her heart too full for anything more. She shook a few stray blonde ringlets out of her eyes, took a deep breath, and smiled again while Jimmy beamed from ear to ear.

“Yep,” Walter Smith said quietly as he leaned against the counter, “enjoy your high-school days, my Pop always said. Never get ‘em back.” Bainbridge’s beloved soda jerk poked Jimmy in the ribs and added, “Don’t keep her out too late! Gotta keep you boys in line.”

James Mansfield—Jimmy as everyone in town called him—suddenly looked older in the soft glow emanating from behind colored glass shades covering the lamps. His clear gray eyes flickered with the same tranquility as the stars did over Summer Lake on a sultry August night.

“I won’t keep Nancy out too late, Mr. Tucker. I just wanted to bring her out here for a soda so you could see how nice our girl looks tonight,” James replied, adjusting his plaid tie.

Nancy forgot she was almost eighteen and grinned up at her lanky date. Her old pal had paid her several compliments throughout the evening, but this one topped them off like a cherry on a banana split! If only he would drop the idea about joining the army after graduation . . .

“Have another malt then, Jimmy. It’s on the house!” Walter chuckled and spun around to fix another chocolate wonder while the two young folks smiled at each other like no one else was in the room. Prom night only came once a year, and Walter wouldn’t trade this one for all the money in the world.

America never looked so charming and kind as she did when Norman Rockwell drew and painted his covers for the Saturday Evening Post! He possessed the uncanny
ability to take a simple, everyday scene and turn it into a snapshot of what life was like in America as we marched on through two world wars, a depression, and uncertainty. Rockwell’s cover illustrations waved above the trenches of France and the steamy jungles of the Pacific like a proud banner, reminding U.S. soldiers of what awaited them back home and those on the home front what was good, innocent, and special about America.

Born in 1894, Rockwell lived in upstate New York as a new century dawned over the United States and the rest of the world. His family recognized his talent early on and, before long, the country boy found himself on the bustling streets of New York City. He studied every aspect of art he could from the Academy of Arts, soaking up stories and methods from masters who spoke of London, Paris, and Berlin. Norman’s imagination, fueled by dreams and memories from his hometown of La Rochelle, ignited, and he began painting and drawing on his own.

From his cramped apartment in the heart of New York, Norman drew and sold his first cover illustration to a boy’s magazine dedicated to helping boys learn about America’s frontier past. Rockwell left his mark on America’s art scene during a time of great change in style and ideas, and his depiction of “small-town” life brought back memories of a kinder, slower-paced world.

Living in picturesque Stockbridge, Massachusetts, and also in Vermont and New York State helped Norman understand the character and dreams of his fellow Americans. Sadly, his life often came up short of the hope and warmth shown in his work; Norman struggled with doubts about God, lost his wife to sickness, and grew weary of painting. However, the young artist found the strength to go on and give his nation a great and lasting gift: pictures of ordinary people caught up in the greater tale of America, a land of faces, stories, and dreams!

If someone asked you today what America looks like, what would your answer be?
Write a brief story of what you believe captures the spirit of America! Be sure to share it with your family.

Math

The prom is a formal dance at the end of the school year for those in high school. It is one way to celebrate the end of the year and, for many, the end of their high school career. Typically, most students want to go, and most girls want to be asked to the prom. Let’s say that the two teens in After the Prom attend a high school that has 250 students who are eligible to go to the prom and that there are 100 girls and 150 boys.

1. Using an inequality sign (< or >), complete this math sentence: 100 ____ 150.

2. If all of the students went to the prom, how many boys would be going alone?

   ______

3. Of course, a prom needs chaperones. If 2 chaperones were required for every 50 students, how many chaperones would be needed altogether if all 250 students attended? ____________

4. A live band was hired to provide the music. How many people will be in the high school gymnasium for the prom if all of the students went, they had all the chaperones they needed, and there were 7 members in the band?

   ____________
5. Tickets for the prom were $10 a person. The proceeds from the tickets went into the class treasury to pay for the decorations, the band, and the refreshments. If all of the students went, how much money would have been made? ____________

6. Now, let’s say that only 80 girls were asked to the prom. Since the others weren’t asked, they stayed home. What percentage of girls didn’t go? ______

7. Twenty-five boys decided the week before the prom that, since they didn’t have dates, they would rather go bowling. How many boys will be attending the prom now? ____________

8. What is the ratio of boys to girls now? Reduce it as much as possible. (Use the information given in #6 and #7.) ______________

9. Once the prom was over, the couple in Norman Rockwell’s painting went to the local soda fountain where they both ordered a hamburger and a milkshake. If hamburgers cost 18 cents and milkshakes cost 25 cents, how much was this boy’s total? (Boys paid for their dates’ food.) ____________ How much change did he receive if he paid with a $5 bill? ______________

10. Finally, if this boy picked up his date at 4:45 p.m. and took her home at 11:15 p.m., how long were they out? __________
Schoolhouse Dailies

Answers:

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Science

Did you ever think of navigation as a science? It is, you know. There is the science of mapmaking, of understanding ocean currents, of charting your course by the stars, and latitude and longitude, and many other things.

Picture yourself riding down a winding, country road in a '57 Chevy. The windows are rolled down and your family is singing fun songs as you roll along. But, then, all of a sudden, you come to a crossroads with a single road sign: Badger City, turn left. Your Dad looks at your Mom with a slightly confused expression as she unfolds a giant roadmap, lays it out on the dashboard, and smooths the crinkles out of the pages.

“Oh, good, we are on the right road! Just go left, honey, like the sign says,” Mom sighs happily, and then asks your brother to open the sandwich tin and pass out the goodies inside.

Your Dad grins and turns left while whistling a tune as you continue on your way.

Now, fast-forward to today with the same mental picture in mind. Instead of a cherry red '57 Chevy, your family sits comfortably in a 2012 Ford Escape. You pause at the exact same crossroads on the same little road. Your Dad looks at your Mom as the English accented voice from the GPS says, “Recalculating!”
In Norman Rockwell’s day, every family in America who wanted to take a trip knew how to read a map. Yes, our technological conveniences of today have revolutionized the way Americans travel and view the world, but knowing the skills of map should never go out of style. After all, what if your GPS breaks down or you are traveling with others who do not have a clue as how to open a road map? How could you help make the situation less stressful if you also have no idea how to navigate without GPS?

History reminds us of the “good old days,” and knowing the basics of maps can keep you on the right path even when technology fizzles out! You will be amazed at how your view of the world will change when you stop looking at a screen and gaze at the wonders of nature passing by!

Select a favorite destination that you and your family enjoy going to on a field trip or on vacation. Map out your journey by using a road map to find rest stops, places of interest, and route numbers that you will need and encounter along the way!

Use an atlas or a travel map and then write out your trip on a piece of blank notebook paper. Share your map with your family and use your finished product the first chance you get!

Physical Education/Health

In the 1950s, there were new dances appearing on the scene. Dancing is a great way to get some exercise, especially the ones from the ‘50s. Dances like “The Twist” allowed the dancer to expend a great deal of energy.

A popular television show, American Bandstand, allowed kids all over the country to learn these new dances. With your parents’ permission, watch these YouTube videos to see how the dances are done and then try them yourself. They show actual footage from the 1950s.
The Twist – Chubby Checker*

The Stroll – The Diamonds* (Parents, please view on full screen as one of the comments is unrelated and offensive.)

Some other dances were the Jitterbug, the Cha Cha, and the Lindy Hop.

If you don’t want to watch the videos, turn on some music from the 1950s and make up your own dance. Just be sure to expend a lot of energy!

Ladies, here is a fun video about the dos and don’ts of dancing with a gentleman in the 1950s.* (Parents, please view on full screen. Unrelated comments and ads can be offensive.)

The Old Schoolhouse® Magazine/SchoolhouseTeachers.com note: Parents should closely monitor children’s use of YouTube and Wikipedia if you navigate away from the videos and articles cited in these lessons. We also recommend viewing the videos on a full screen setting in order to minimize your students’ exposure to potentially offensive ads.

Home Economics

After the Prom shows a young couple at a soda fountain after the big dance. The menu may have included things like hamburgers and hot dogs, but it definitely would have had a wide variety of sundaes and milkshakes of all different flavors.

What is your favorite flavor of ice cream? What is your favorite ice cream product? Do you like milkshakes or ice cream cones better? How about sundaes or root beer floats?

With your parents’ help, design a vintage-looking menu with prices included and create a meal that resembles what this young couple may have ordered at the soda fountain.
Will you have hamburgers or hot dogs? Will you have French fries or onion rings? What will you have for dessert?

Here is a simple recipe for vanilla milkshakes:

2 cups vanilla ice cream (choose different flavors if you would like to provide choices)
1 cup whole milk (substitute with lower-fat milk if calories are a concern)
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Place all ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth. Pour into glasses and serve.

Notebooking

At the top of a piece of notebooking paper, attach a picture of After the Prom or try your hand at drawing it.

Answer the following questions:

1. When was Norman Rockwell born?
2. What type of an artist was he?
3. Where was his work displayed for 47 years?
4. What types of images did he depict in his illustrations?
5. What was the date of the issue on which After the Prom appeared?
6. Name some interesting things that happened during the 1950s.

Activity—Grades K-2

What kind of ice cream is your favorite? Do you like more than one flavor?
Draw a HUGE ice cream cone with LOTS of scoops of ice cream. How many scoops will you use? What flavors will they be? Have fun!

**Activity—Grades 3-6**

What flavor of soda or juice do you like to drink? My favorite soda to drink is a cola with cherry syrup or flavoring in it. Let’s create some art in the kitchen.

With a parent’s permission and assistance, try to think of a new combination you can try for a drink. What ingredients might taste good together? What wouldn’t taste good?

Have fun and experiment! You never know what you might invent!

**Activity—Grades 7-12**

Soda shops of the 1950s are a favorite style in retro décor. Certain colors and styles represent the 1950s in America. Do some research and create a presentation of pictures that are unmistakably 1950s style.

- To discover more about these contributors and to learn how you can join the Star Contributor’s team, see page 212.