

“The Four Freedoms”

(art + history; art + language arts)

During World War II, President Franklin Roosevelt delivered a State of the Union speech in which he spoke of four basic freedoms he dreamed of being available to everyone in the world. Artist Norman Rockwell interpreted these freedoms in a series of popular paintings published by the Saturday Evening Post in 1943.

This lesson plan challenges students to consider the concept of freedom: what it meant to a president, an artist and what it means to them today.

Grade Levels 3-8

Note: Instructions and materials based on a class of 25 students. Adjust as needed.

Process

1. Introduce the lesson by reading the excerpt from Roosevelt’s speech:

“In the future days...we look forward to a world founded upon four essential human freedoms

.The first is freedom of speech and expression—everywhere in the world.

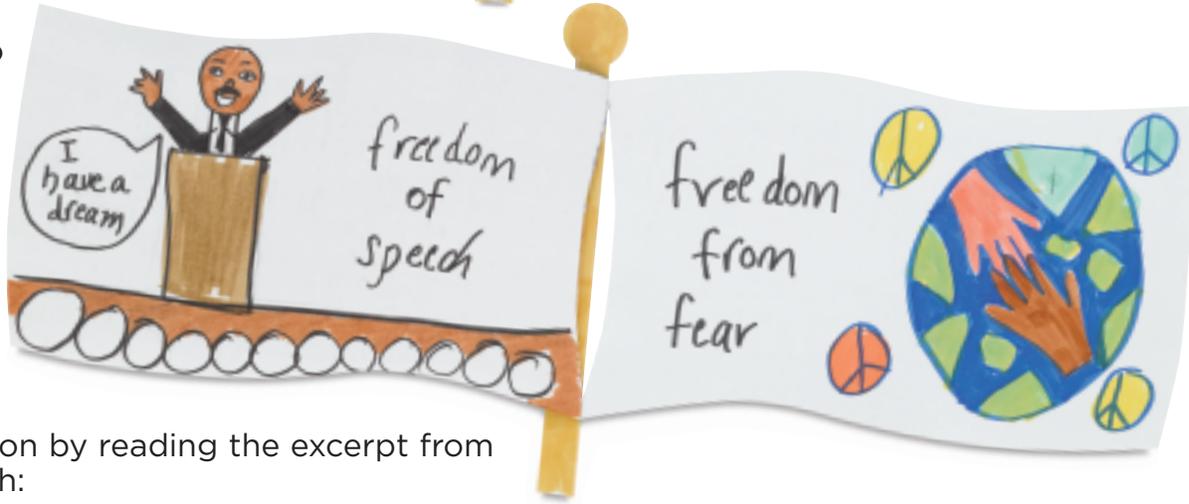
The second is freedom of every person to worship God in his own way—everywhere in the world.

The third is freedom from want...everywhere in the world.

The fourth is freedom from fear...that no nation will be in a position to commit an act of physical aggression against any neighbor—anywhere in the world.”

You may wish to compare this to the five freedoms identified in the First Amendment (religion, assembly, press, petition, and speech).

2. Follow by viewing and discussing Rockwell’s paintings. [The Taschen Basic Art Series Book: Rockwell](#) (70033-1068) is a good resource.
3. Next, students imagine that they have Norman Rockwell’s assignment: create meaningful illustrations of the ways these four freedoms play out in our lives today. On a sheet of paper, create a heading for each “Freedom”. Discuss as a class or in small groups and create a list of ideas generated. Students will select one idea from each list.



Materials

Roylco® Flag Designer Sheets, package of 24 (63217-1001); need three sheets per student

Materials for Illustration, recommend:

Sargent Art® Fine Tip Washable Markers, 50-color set (21295-1050); share five sets across classroom

Blick® Broadline Water-based Markers, 8-color set (21224-0089); share five sets across classroom

Sargent Art® Colored Pencils, 24-color set (22046-1024); share five sets across classroom



Process, continued

4. Assemble the Freedom Book by gluing, taping or stapling three of the Flag Designer sheets along the area shaped like a flagpole on the left side. Design the cover to look like an American flag.
5. Inside the book, students will write the name of each of the freedoms and create an illustration of it on one page. As an option, students may use the last page to think of something they believe should be a right — a freedom— for every person, define it and illustrate it. Flag designer paper is made from heavy cardstock, and accepts colored pencil, marker and crayon.

Options

1. Students may look for photographs in newspapers and magazines that illustrate the freedoms — for example, someone protesting or speaking to a group would illustrate Freedom of Speech. Cut out and glue to the pages of the Freedom Book.
2. Older students may produce posters instead of books. Poster prints of Norman Rockwell's "Four Freedoms" were sold by the United States Government to raise money for the war department and inspire patriotism in the American public.

National Standards for Visual Arts Education

Content Standard #3 — Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas

K-4 Students select and use subject matter, symbols, and ideas to communicate meaning

5-8 Students use subjects, themes, and symbols that demonstrate knowledge of contexts, values, and aesthetics that communicate intended meaning in artworks

Content Standard #4 — Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures

K-4 Students know that the visual arts have both a history and specific relationships to various cultures

5-8 Students analyze, describe, and demonstrate how factors of time and place (such as climate, resources, ideas, and technology) influence visual characteristics that give meaning and value to a work of art

Content Standard #5 — Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others

K-4 Students understand there are various purposes for creating works of visual art

5-8 Students analyze contemporary and historic meanings in specific artworks through cultural and aesthetic inquiry