



Grade: 3

Subjects: Drama and Social Studies

Town Meeting

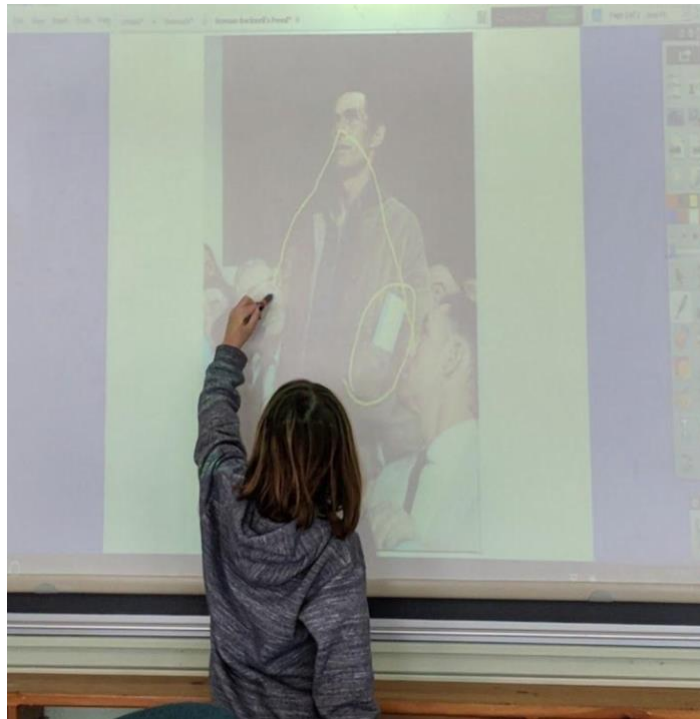
Lesson Overview	Using the Norman Rockwell painting “Freedom of Speech,” students will be introduced to the idea of a town meeting as a government proceeding, as well as the art analysis method known as Visual Thinking Strategies. After analyzing the painting for artistic choices that draw the eye to various elements of the painting and discussing what is happening in the painting, the teacher will provide students with the background story of a town meeting in Vermont. Students will take on the poses of the subjects of the painting and discuss how they might feel if they had been there. Once the concept of town meeting as the people’s voice in local government is developed through discussion and reading of text, students will act out a “class meeting” to discuss important issues.
How the Arts Improve this Lesson	The use of Norman Rockwell’s “Freedom of Speech” serves to help students understand that art can be used as propaganda, communicating what the illustrator wants viewers to see. The use of drama, both in taking on poses of painting subjects and in acting out a “class meeting” similar to a town meeting helps students to deepen their understanding of what happens in local government as it exists in their own town, and why it is important (for example, to give the citizens a say in their government). The creation of a “class meeting” brings the DOK level to a 4. This lesson presents new access points to curriculum concepts that traditional methods may not provide. Students for whom traditional reading and writing assignments and assessments are challenging, are given the opportunity to learn and demonstrate understanding of concepts in different ways. By providing a purpose beyond regurgitating information, the arts allow students to become more engaged in their own learning through multiple modalities.
Assessment of Student Learning	

Massachusetts Learning Standards	Evidence	Collection Strategy
<p>Grades 3-4. Theatre. Creating. 3. Refine and complete artistic work. Respond to a theatrical challenge and hypothesize possible solutions. 3-4.D.Cr.03</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will take on the role/pose of subjects in “Freedom of Speech” based on the story of the painting. • Sharing, discussion, debriefing 	<p>Formative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher notes on comments made by students and questions students ask while setting themselves up as the image <p>Summative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photographs of the students’ “image” • Teacher documentation of student explanations for their dramatic choices and how being “in” the image made them feel
<p>Grades 3-4. Theatre. Performing. 6. Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work. Perform scenes aligned with a teacher directed mood. 3-4.T.P.06</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will take on different roles from town meetings in the drama of a class meeting (eg. clerk/note-taker, moderator, townspeople/ classmates) • Students will explain their dramatic choices • Sharing, discussion, debriefing 	<p>Formative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher documentation of student explanations for their choice of gestures, facial expression, sounds and or speech, location or movement during the class meeting • Teacher notes on student suggestions to peers for improvement

			<p>Summative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Photographs of students in role ● teacher notes on student participation ● student reflections about the drama activity charted by the teacher
	<p>Grade 3. History and Social Studies. Massachusetts cities and towns today and in history. Explain why classrooms, schools, towns, and cities have governments, what governments do, how local governments are organized in MA, and how people participate in and contribute to their communities.</p> <p>C. communities have either a city or town form of government (town meeting) 3.T1.3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students will be able to explain why we have town government and how it is organized (town meeting and elected officials) ● Students will be able to explain how they can contribute to their town and class (meetings, voting) 	<p>Formative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Teacher notes on student comments about why we have government and what our local government is setup like <p>Summative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Student written reflections on how they can contribute to their town and class through meetings
<p>Essential Questions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How can people have a say in their local government? ● Why are town meetings important? ● How can we use drama to communicate ideas? 		
<p>Enduring Understandings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Citizens can have a say in how their town operates. ● Acting out concepts can help give context/meaning to abstract ideas. 		

Materials and Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Norman Rockwell’s “Freedom of Speech” painting (copies for students to hold as well as projected on the Promethean board or other smartboard) ● <i>The Massachusetts Story</i> textbook, Ch 6 Lesson ● a real town report from the where the school is located (or multiple copies if possible) ● copy of the U.S. Constitution’s Bill of Rights for review (from prior instruction earlier in the year) ● paper and pencil for written reflection ● computers for students who need to type rather than write ● chart paper and markers ● teacher-made agenda for students to follow in their class meeting ● camera ● large enough space to allow for students to recreate the image
Advancing Vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● government ● freedom of speech ● town meeting ● representation ● moderator ● clerk ● point of view ● focal point ● tableaux ● acting
Support & Accommodations Inspired by Universal Design for Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● partner reading of the textbook as needed ● computers for typing as needed for students with writing challenges ● voice to text option on computers for non-writers ● allowing students to participate in the drama in whatever way they feel comfortable
Lesson Plan Progression Details	<p>Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The teacher will display an image of the “Freedom of Speech” propaganda poster on the Promethean board or other smartboard. The teacher will lead the students in a discussion about what they notice in

the image (**DOK 1 - students name what they see**). The teacher will use the following Visual Thinking Strategies prompts: “What is going on in this picture? What do you see that makes you say that? What else can we find?” The teacher might also ask what we could figure out about the speaker and about the other people in the audience (**DOK 3 - draw conclusions**). After enough time for observations, the teacher will provide background information about the image (it is inspired by an actual **town meeting** in Arlington, VT) and point out features students may not have noticed or known about. Such features include the similarities and differences between the focal point (the man standing) and those seated around him (**DOK 2 - compare and contrast**), how it illustrates that people can have a say in their community, etc.



Student sees a triangle



Student looks closely at the image

LS: I was pleasantly surprised at the insight students showed when looking closely at the image. They made connections to other topics we had learned about and helped me understand their background knowledge. They made observations and supported their ideas with details from the image. Some comments students made: "I think he's (the standing man) talking to the government about No Taxation Without Representation." "He might be in an audience asking questions." "Everyone's ears are big. The painter might want you to realize the people are really listening to the man standing." Students loved the background story that explains the painting was inspired by a real town meeting that took place in a small Vermont town nearby. Once they learned about the artist's technique of using triangulation, they began identifying other triangles within the image. Later, when looking at other art in unrelated lessons and field trips, students remembered the triangle technique and pointed it out in other images. They also are looking more closely at paintings and images and pointing out visual arts related elements. This is DOK level 4 because they are applying what they remember learning to a new image or situation.

Pose a Question

- Could we recreate this image ourselves? Have students work together to recreate the image. Throughout the activity, the teacher should prompt and question. Some questions might include the following: Where would we pose? How could we show the different levels in the image? How could you show interest in the speaker? What would happen if...? (**DOK 3 - predict**) When the image is created, the teacher will take a photo of the image, and display it on the Promethean board so all students can see what it looked like. The group will discuss what they see, how it is similar to the original image, and how they felt in their role. The teacher will ask students how they felt during the activity. Next, the teacher will cue students to change the image: what if the people weren't listening to the speaker? Why might that have happened? What if the speaker weren't prepared to speak with knowledge about the topic? Have students recreate the image in a new, not-so-positive way.



Similar Image- listening carefully



Opposite Image- not listening

LS: The class loved this activity! They were totally engaged in the planning and creating of the image, from location, to furniture and props, to facial expressions and more. One thing I may do differently next time I do this lesson, is to incorporate a “talking stick” to help with focusing on one person speaking at a time as they weren’t always listening to each other. When I asked the class to imagine the image from a different perspective, they dove right into the task. Having them extend their thinking and create a new image in which the townspeople didn’t believe in freedom of speech brought this to a DOK level 4. They weren’t just copying an image, but creating something new that communicated an opposing view.

Activity:

- The teacher asks students how they might have a say in their town and charts their responses. Remind students of knowledge from previous social studies units: the Constitution and Bill of Rights, as well as the reason colonists in the 1700s were upset with the British government (no representation). Display

replicas of the two documents. Let students know that now we have **representation**, and are allowed to have a say in the **government** because of these documents (**DOK 1 - recall**).

- Students will partner-read the portion of the chapter on local government in the textbook *The Massachusetts Story*. After reading, gather the class together to share what they learned about how people can have a say in their **government** (e.g. town meetings, voting, letters to selectmen, etc.)
- Explain to the class that they will create a “class meeting” using the town meeting format and to do so roles of a **moderator**, note-taker/**clerk**, and various townspeople will be needed. Once the roles are explained, and chosen or assigned, pass out a meeting agenda with topics to discuss and vote upon. These should be relevant to students and realistic, so that there is valuable discussion. For example, a teacher wants students to have to do at least one hour of homework a day, and the participants in the “class meeting” get to vote on whether they want that or not. The roles should be written out and posted in the room for students to refer to throughout the activity.
- The **moderator** calls the meeting to order. The **clerk** takes note of the time.
- The **moderator** reads the first article for discussion and voting. Students (townspeople) cannot talk unless called upon by the **moderator**. When discussion is exhausted, the **moderator** calls for a vote by raising of hands. The **clerk** takes notes on discussion and the voting results. This process repeats until all articles have been addressed.
- The **moderator** calls the meeting to an end and the **clerk** notes the time (**DOK 4 - translate information from a text to a dramatic performance**).

LS: I was so excited about this activity! Students took on the role of different people in a community attending a town meeting, and responded in character to three different issues that could really apply to their hometown. While some students were a little silly, most stayed in their roles, making thoughtful comments and stating opinions with details to support their thoughts. One student who often relates topics to unrelated ideas that he thinks he knows or learned from the internet, amazed me by staying in character and taking the task seriously. Students showed that they remembered that only registered voters who live in town can vote, but even a child can share thoughts, and people who work in town but don't live there can have a say at town meetings, even if they can't vote. This DOK 4 activity really helped students understand the purpose of town meetings and how residents and non-residents can have a say in their community. Additionally, students learned more about drama, and how challenging it is to stay in character when playing a role. By using drama, students were freed from needing to only memorize facts about local government, and to be able to participate in an activity in which

they could show their understanding in a fun, engaging way. They didn't need to take a traditional quiz or complete a worksheet, which they would have quickly forgotten. Instead, they talked about this lesson and activity for the rest of the school year. One thing that was suggested by a colleague who observed this lesson progression, was to create character cards with suggestions of what kind of responses they may have for each issue brought up at the mock town meeting. This could have provided support to students who were unsure about what to say.

Sharing/Observations

- Now that the mock **town meeting** as a class meeting is done, have students reflect on how they felt in their roles and why. The teacher charts their responses. Some possible responses might include that they felt important because they were able to share their opinions, they felt listened to, they were uncomfortable because others disagreed with them, the **clerk** felt anxious because it was hard to take notes so fast, etc. The teacher might need to prompt students: How might this experience have felt if people didn't listen to the speaker? (**DOK 4 - extend thinking to a new situation**)

LS: One thing that disappointed me about students' reflections is that they focused on how hard it was to stay still in the tableau of the Norman Rockwell image of "Freedom of Speech," and less on the process and social studies topics. In the town meeting reflections, many students focused on those who were silly, but when I redirected them, students began making thoughtful comments. When I asked how they felt in the role, I was pleased to hear thoughtful responses. "I felt mad a lot." - because she didn't agree with what was happening or with what others were saying. "I liked the role I was doing as the finance person." "It made me wonder why someone would shut down a library." "I felt a little confused when (a student) talked about education needing a library when there are other libraries close. I was OK with disagreeing with him." One student, who played a child at the town meeting, observed that "they talked about laws and rights and people agreed or disagreed." It was nice to see that students could respectfully disagree, and when they voted on an issue, whether the results were what they wanted or not, they accepted it because they had followed the process.

Closure/Reflection

- As a final activity, students will write a reflection on the "class meeting." They will write about how they felt about the activity, and they will share what they learned about how they can participate in or

contribute to their class community and their town (**DOK 3 - use evidence to synthesize**). The written reflections will be collected by the teacher as evidence of learning.

LS: Most students' reflections focused on how fun the activities in this lesson were. In the future, I might give guidelines for their reflections to focus only on the social studies content and the drama content. Perhaps I would post the standards for discussion before the written reflection, and ask students to reflect on what they learned in relation to those.

Final LS Reflections: One moment that popped for me was during the planning of the replica and opposing idea of the Norman Rockwell image, "Freedom of Speech." Students were looking very critically at the original image to recreate it. They were having deep conversations about how they might represent the image, where in the room they should stage it, how they would create the different levels within the image, who would "play" each character, etc. I was impressed with their willingness to try multiple different ways. Then when I asked them to recreate the image as if they didn't believe in freedom of speech, their enthusiasm exploded all over again. The conversation about how they could represent this since they couldn't talk was great. They discussed facial expressions and body language as ways to communicate - a wonderful focus of the drama standards. They also talked at length about how it would be terrible to not have freedom of speech for everyone - that would mean only some people would get to say what they want and to make the rules. This was a very meaningful part of this lesson.

A second moment that popped for me was when students shared their reflections on how they felt in role during the town meeting. I was surprised when students talked about feeling uncomfortable, mad, or confused - not as the students in my class, but in their roles. I was surprised that they were able to feel those feelings as if they were the character. The parent character said she "kept talking about my kids." The child character said she "felt uncomfortable being the only child." It was as if they had empathy for these characters, which was wonderful!

The first learning moment gave me insight to what students can see and do when they have the time and are encouraged to look deeply at an image and to be creative. Too often, teachers give students information and expect them to regurgitate it back upon request, both verbally and in writing as on traditional quizzes and tests. Allowing students to take the driver's seat in their own learning is so empowering, and helps them to make connections and to utilize the arts to learn and express their own learning.

	<p><i>The second learning moment taught me that students are empathetic. They don't have to be told to think about how others might feel when they are given the opportunity to take on the role of a character. Empathy helps students understand historical events and the people who experienced them in first person. Students can understand why people did the things they did in response to what others were doing, particularly when governments made rules that they didn't agree with, because if they imagine themselves in those roles, they feel what the character must have been feeling. If teachers simply tell students what happened and why, and expect them to remember, some will memorize the facts, but many won't because they mean nothing to them. When students can make a connection, they are much more likely to remember and understand.</i></p>								
<p>Resources</p>	<p>“Freedom of Speech” painting by Norman Rockwell: https://www.nrm.org/2012/10/collections-four-freedoms/ The Massachusetts Story, published by Gibbs-Smith</p> <p>Yenawine, P. (2013). Visual thinking strategies: Using art to deepen learning across school disciplines. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.</p>								
<p>Appendix</p>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;">Exit Ticket</td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;">Name: _____</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">Town Meeting Lesson</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Date: _____</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2" style="padding: 10px;"> <p>Directions: Answer each question using complete sentences.</p> <p>1. What do you think a town meeting is?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> </td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2" style="padding: 10px;"> <p>2. Should we have town meetings in class? Why or why not?</p> </td> </tr> </table>	Exit Ticket	Name: _____	Town Meeting Lesson	Date: _____	<p>Directions: Answer each question using complete sentences.</p> <p>1. What do you think a town meeting is?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>		<p>2. Should we have town meetings in class? Why or why not?</p>	
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3. How did you feel about your role in the town meeting we acted out? Why?

Plan written by Denise Chesbro

Plan edited by BRAINworks Curriculum Review Committee

Stamp design by AGRAND.ie