

# 1948 Presidential Election

## Background

Harry S. Truman won an upset victory in the 1948 Presidential Election. Most pollsters predicted he would lose to his opponent Thomas Dewey. Truman campaigned by crisscrossing the country by train getting his message to the people directly. The country was divided and many people decided at the last moment who they were going to vote for.

The focus of this activity will be Norman Rockwell's painting entitled, "Family Squabble." This oil painting shows a husband and wife arguing over the breakfast table about Truman and Thomas Dewey, the Democratic and Republican Party nominees for president in 1948. Rockwell created the painting for a Saturday Evening Post magazine cover in October 1948, just days before the election.

## Vocabulary

Artifact- an object made by a human being, typically an item of cultural or historical interest

Primary Source- an original record or item created at the time of an event, or an eye-witness account recorded after an event occurs

Squabble - a noisy quarrel about something petty or trivial.

## Materials Needed

1. Copy of provided artwork
2. NARA analysis worksheet  
(<https://www.archives.gov/files/education/lessons/worksheets/artwork-analysis-worksheet.pdf>)

## Procedure

1. Discuss background information with the class
2. Define vocabulary words
3. Hand out copies of Family Squabble
4. Discuss student answers

## Assessment

Each student will work individually or in pairs to analyze Norman Rockwell's Family Squabble and create the written thoughts that the characters would be thinking or saying in 1948.



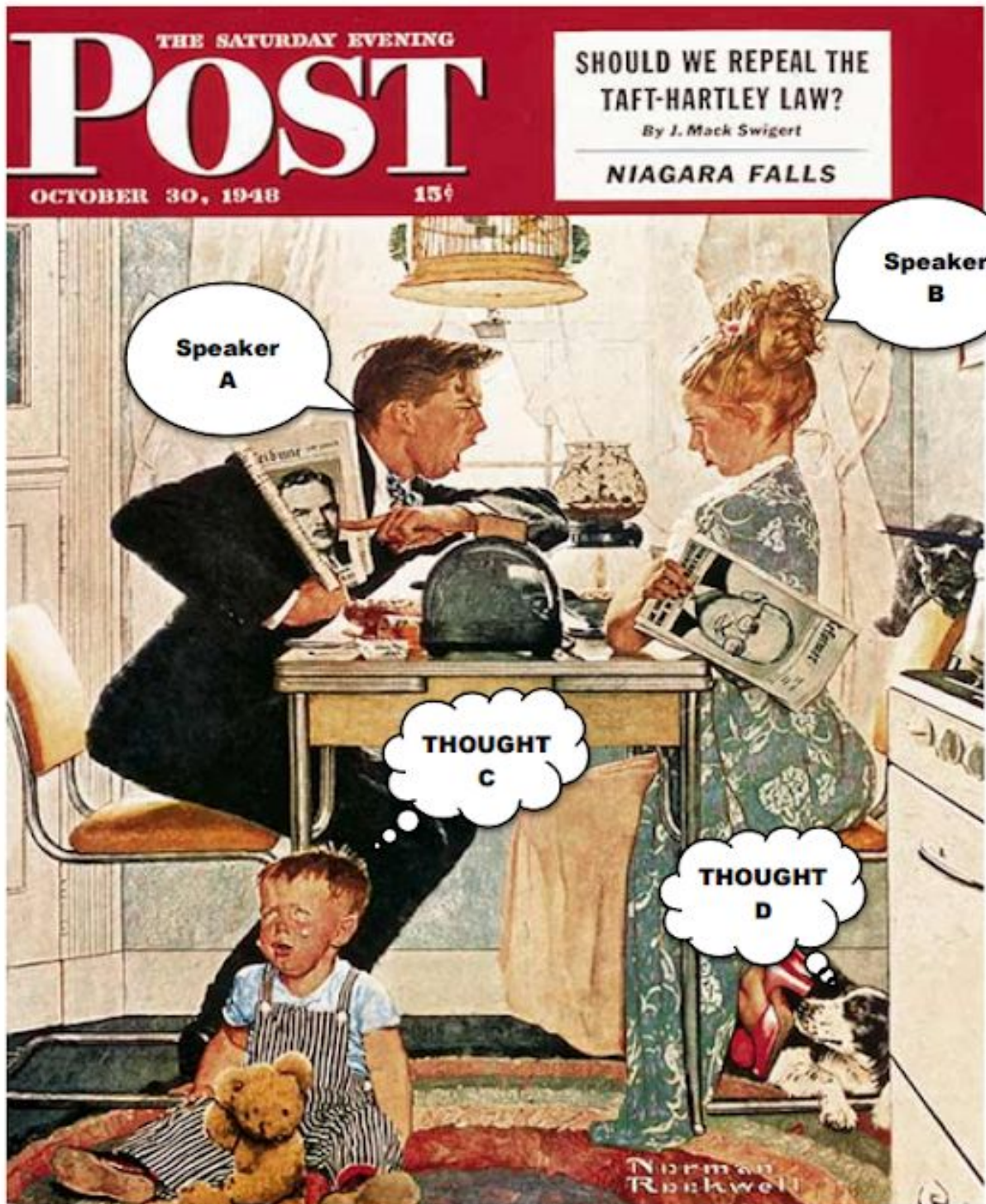
1. Start by using visual thinking strategies to discuss the painting with the class.
  - a. What do you notice?
  - b. What else do you notice?
  - c. What makes you say that?
2. Use the NARA analysis sheet to examine the painting more closely  
<https://www.archives.gov/files/education/lessons/worksheets/artwork-analysis-worksheet.pdf>

Name:

Block:

**Norman Rockwell's *Family Squabble* and the 1948 Election**

**Directions:** Consider what the characters below are arguing about. In the given graphic organizer, fill in *historically accurate* statements about the 1948 election for the characters in the painting.



Name:

Block:

**Norman Rockwell's *Family Squabble* and the 1948 Election**

**Directions:** Using the given image, create the arguments each character of the painting might be using. Your comments *must* show an understanding of the campaign issues in the 1948 election.

<b>Speech or Thought Bubble</b>	<b>Describe the character's allegiance and provide evidence supporting your belief</b>	<b>Write what the character in the image might be arguing given your knowledge of the 1948 election.</b>
<b>A</b>		
<b>B</b>		
<b>C</b>		
<b>D</b>		
<b>For Fun: The teddy bear</b>		