

Teacher Guide to Worksheet 3: Advertising Through Calendar Art

Griffith Harold Teller (1899-1993) was born in Newark, New Jersey. He attended the School of Fine and Industrial Arts in Newark and the Art Students' League in New York City and went on to work for the Osborne Company as an artist in advertising. "Grif," as he was affectionately known, painted many works of art for calendar production. From 1928 to 1942 and from 1947 to 1958, he created oil paintings used on the Pennsylvania Railroad's annual advertising calendar. These calendars were mass produced; in fact, hundreds of thousands of calendars were manufactured and distributed worldwide! As a result, his artwork has become well-known and admired.

You have an example of Griffith Teller's calendar art for Pennsylvania Railroad and a black and white photograph taken of the same location.

1. Compare the painting to the photograph. Is the photograph the exact same perspective as the painting?

No.

Which perspective is more appealing? Why?

The perspective of the painting. It includes more of the cityscape, minimizes the building in front of one of the bridges, and does not show electric poles and a joining railroad lines on the other side of the train.

Name three details that are different from the painting to the photograph.

1. The coal bins are present in the painting.
2. A second train ("Merchandise" printed on the side) is on the other side of the train.
3. The cityspace is closer.

(Other details: The sky is clearer in Teller's painting. The water is clear enough to see the cityscape reflection in the painting.)

2. Where do think this is? (Clue 1: It is in Pennsylvania. Look at the clues the painting provides as well: It is a big city. A river is nearby. Coal is being transported here to possibly make steel.)

Pittsburgh

3. What would you name this painting? What is the message of the painting?

The actual name of the painting is *Pittsburgh Promotes Progress* (1934). The painting shows an idealized version of industrial progress. Pennsylvania Railroad is shown as the vital link providing coal and transportation to and from the city.

4. During what time of day did Teller paint this scene? How do you know?

This was painted as an early morning or twilight scene as evidenced by the long shadows and quality of light in the painting.

5. Teller did not paint the scene realistically, but romanticized it. One way he did this was by painting things unusually clean and brilliant. What seems unnaturally clean in the picture? Name at least three things.

1. The coal bins have absolute no soot!
2. The river--sparkling
3. The sky—no haze

Other possible answers:

The railroad tracks.

The trains.

6. Let's look at the visual elements and principles of this artwork.

Color: Teller uses color very effectively in his painting. What are the two dominant (main) colors in the piece?

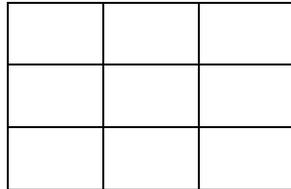
Red and yellow. These are also the colors of the Pennsylvania Railroad.

Where are they used?

Red: trains and coal cars.

Yellow: stripe on train, quality of light in the sky and on some of the skyscrapers

Focal points: Fold your painting into thirds. Repeat the process so that you have three sections vertically (up and down), and three going across the painting. Now make four marks.



Mark all four corners of your center square. These are four focal points of the painting.

What landmarks did Teller paint along these lines?

The horizontal line of the bridges comprises the top focal line. The two tallest skyscrapers line up with the two vertical focal lines.

Movement: Does this painting feel like it has movement in it? Explain your answer.

Yes. It feels like the train is moving forward across the painting and towards me (the viewer). This is interesting because “moving forward” and “progress” are similar concepts.

7. In your opinion, is this an effective advertising tool for Pennsylvania Railroad? Why or why not?

Yes, this is an effective advertising tool. Although it does not specifically target and promote passenger train travel, the painting is still an effective tool. It shows the railroad company contributing to the industrial and economic progress of society. It is also simply beautiful to look at, and the more people do so, the more the railroad company will be in the minds of potential customers.