

## For Every Season | About the Artist

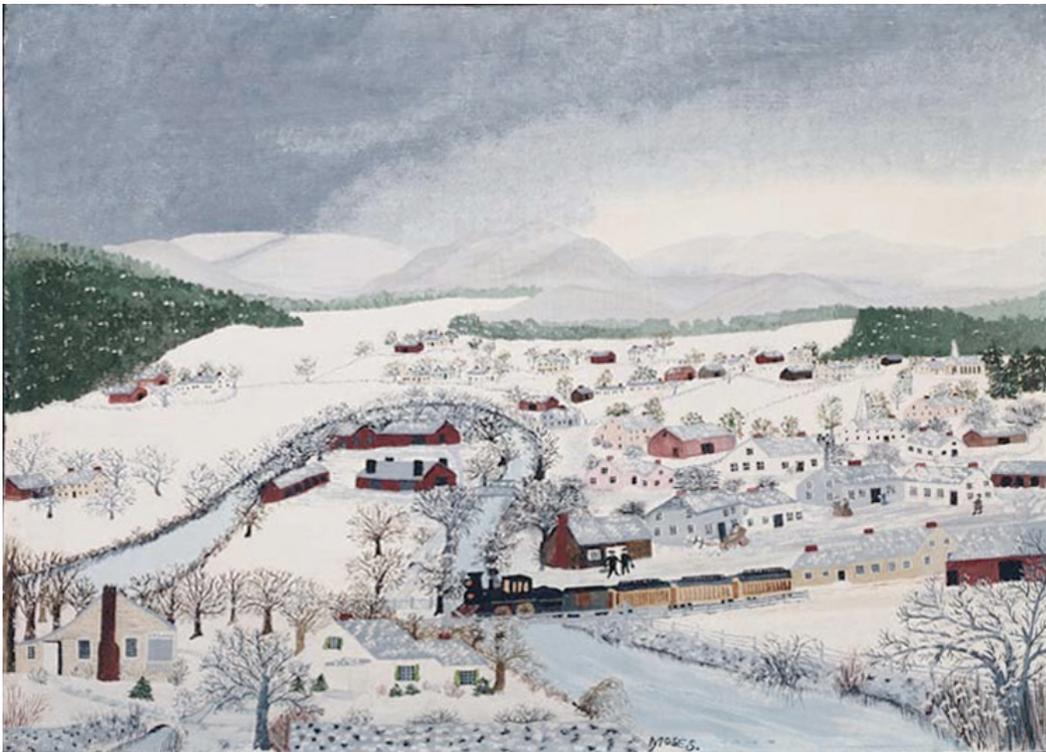
Grandma Moses, born Anna Mary Robertson (1860–1961) was an American folk painter who was internationally popular for her documentation of rural life in the United States in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Anna Roberson had minimal education during her childhood and at age 12 left her parents' farm, working as a hired girl until she married Thomas Moses in 1887. They first farmed in the Shenandoah Valley near Staunton, Virginia, and in 1905 moved to New York near her birthplace. Thomas passed in 1927, and Anna continued to farm with her youngest son until her age forced her to retire to her daughter's home in 1936.

From an early age the artist had been encouraged to draw—using the juice of berries and grapes to add color. After her husband died, she created works with embroidery until her

arthritis became an obstacle to manipulating the needle. At this time she transitioned to painting, initially copying illustrations and then re-creating scenes from her childhood. Still favoring the simple materials from her childhood, Moses used cardboard, wood or board for her canvas.

Beginning with her childhood on a farm, and continuing to live in rural areas doing agricultural work, Grandma Moses's artwork has always reflected the landscapes that surrounded her and her life experiences. Several of her consistent themes included family, rural life, holidays and seasons, and life growing up and living on a farm. Although she was a prolific artist, generating more than 1500 canvases in three decades, Moses did not begin to paint until her 70s. In 1938 a New



Grandma Moses  
(1860–1961)  
Anna Mary Robertson  
Moses  
*Hoosick Falls in Winter*,  
1944  
Oil on hardboard  
The Phillips Collection,  
Washington, D.C.

York engineer and art collector, Louis J. Caldor, driving through Hoosick Falls, saw some of Moses' paintings hanging in the window of the drug store. He purchased them all (paying \$3–5 apiece) and within the next year three were displayed in an exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Moses enjoyed national and international fame, breaking attendance records with her exhibitions. The simple realism, and nostalgic atmosphere of Moses's work has been reproduced on Christmas cards, textiles and tiles and her paintings are part of both private and museum collections.

The village of Hoosick Falls holds a key place in the biography of Grandma Moses. It is the location that her paintings were first discovered,

but also her connection to her past and family memories and traditions. Up until the Great Depression, Hoosick Falls was a busy, commercial center, its industrial potential defined by the confluence of Hoosick and Walloomsack Rivers. The area was also once the hunting grounds of the Mohican Indian tribe.

Moses painted numerous versions of *Hoosick Falls*, showing the village in various seasons. Her palette was determined by the season and she provided a bird's eye perspective to give a full survey of the terrain. Often the people and animals were added in the final stages after the landscape was completed.



Tampa Museum of Art

## For Every Season | Lesson Plan



**Grade level** Elementary (Grades 3–5)

**Subjects** Visual arts, Language arts

### Lesson Summary

Students learn about American artist Grandma Moses and her style of painting. Following the example of *Hoosick Falls in Winter*, students capture information on a student worksheet for discussion, and use the ideas to create an original watercolor.

### Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Learn about the artist Grandma Moses
- Record ideas and/or observations in response to the painting *Hoosick Falls in Winter* on a student worksheet
- Create a watercolor based on the style and theme of the artist Grandma Moses

### Materials

- *About the Artist* information sheet
- Image of *Hoosick Falls in Winter*
- Activity worksheet
- Examples of other landscape paintings showing seasonal influence (optional)
- Watercolor paper 9" x 12"
- Brushes
- Water cups
- Watercolor paints

### Preparation

Teachers should be familiar with the artist Grandma Moses and provide additional examples of her work reflecting her style, technique and subject matter.

Teachers should be able to demonstrate various methods of watercolor painting and process, including paper preparation, dry brush, scratching into a wet surface and adding detail after paint has dried.

### Instruction

Review artist and her work with students.

Using the *About the Artist* information sheet and *Hoosick Falls in Winter* image (additional artist images to reflect other seasons optional) review with students the artist biography and Grandma Moses's style of painting. Discuss her choice of subject matter and how her landscapes reflected different seasons and color palettes. Include discussion on the format of the paintings (fore, middle, and background) and how she often added her characters after the general landscape.

### Distribute copies of the Student Worksheets.

Using the student worksheet ask students to list words that they feel represent each season, i.e. white, cold, snow. After giving students time to make notes, ask for volunteers to share their completed lists. Record student responses for each season on a white board.

Ask students to write down the types of activities that might occur during the seasons—repeat process of sharing responses and record these on the board.

**Review watercolor painting process and materials with students.**

Have materials set up and provide examples of watercolor painting methods.

**Create a seasonal watercolor painting**

Students should choose a season to paint incorporating their descriptive words and activities from their student worksheets.

**Share completed works.**

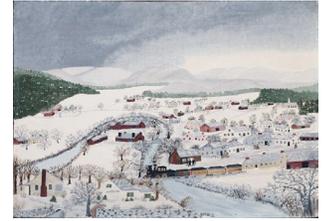
Have students volunteer to discuss their final works and their choice of season and activities. Are these traditional activities for their families or things they would like to do? Discuss how climates and season differ depending on where one lives.

**Extension activities and resources**

Collect images of different landscapes (rural and urban) and have students identify time of year based on factors in the works (clothing, color of trees and plants).

Discuss the interpretation of seasons in other art forms including music (Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*), poetry, and literature.

# For Every Season | Student Worksheet



**For each season list words that you feel represent that time of year.**

Example: Spring – green, fresh

**Add activities or events that might occur during the seasons.**

Example: Winter – skiing.

	<b>Descriptive words</b>	<b>Activities/Events</b>
<b>Spring</b>		
<b>Summer</b>		
<b>Fall</b>		
<b>Winter</b>		