

"Memory Paintings" Art & Storytelling Activity

[National Day Classroom](#)

Grade Level: 3rd-8th grade (adaptable) **Duration:** 45-60 minutes

Background Mini-Lesson (10 minutes)

Share Grandma Moses' inspiring story: Anna Mary Robertson Moses didn't start painting until age 78 due to arthritis making embroidery difficult. She became famous for her folk art depicting rural American life and memories of simpler times. She painted over 1,000 works and lived to 101!

Activity Steps:

Part 1: Memory Collection (15 minutes) Students brainstorm and write about a special memory - perhaps a family gathering, holiday tradition, or favorite place. Encourage them to think about:

- What did the setting look like?
- What activities were happening?
- What details made it special?
- What season was it?

Part 2: Folk Art Creation (25 minutes) Using simple materials (crayons, colored pencils, or tempera paints), students create their own "folk art" painting of their memory in Grandma Moses' style:

- Simple, flattened perspective
- Bright, cheerful colors
- Lots of activity and detail
- Rural or homey settings work well

Part 3: Gallery Walk & Sharing (10 minutes) Students display their work and share the stories behind their paintings.

Materials Needed:

- Paper (9x12 or larger)
- Crayons, colored pencils, or tempera paints
- Examples of Grandma Moses paintings (print or digital)

Extension Ideas:

- Write a short story to accompany the painting
- Interview a grandparent or elder about their childhood memories
- Research other "late bloomer" artists or achievers.