

REYNOLDA

Lesson Plan: Understanding Grant Wood's *Spring Turning*

Grades

6-12

Subject Areas

Visual Arts

Language Arts

Estimated Time

(2-3) class sessions

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Student Learning Objectives

Students will learn about the life of Iowa painter, craftsman, and teacher Grant DeVolson Wood (1891-1952), who drew upon his childhood memories of farm life to create *Spring Turning* (1936). Students will understand how Grant Wood is both a Regionalist and a Modern artist by comparing his landscape painting *Spring Turning* (1936) with works by his contemporaries. They will learn to look closely at the artworks; to use observational skills to analyze both content and styles conduct research using the museum's digital collections database through the website; compare and contrast artwork, considering different cultural attitudes prevalent during the 1920s and 1930s.

Essential Questions

How does this painting, *Spring Turning* (1936) by Grant Wood, reflect Regionalist and Modernist tendencies when compared with another American artwork of that period?

Resources

Grant Wood (1891 – 1942), *Spring Turning*, 1936. Oil on Masonite. Gift of Barbara B. Millhouse, Reynolda House Museum of American Art, 1991.2.2

reynoldahouse.org/collections/object/spring-turning

Georgia O'Keeffe (1881 – 1986), *Pool in the Woods, Lake George*, 1922. Pastel on paper. Gift of Barbara B. Millhouse in memory of E. Carter, Nancy Susan Reynolds, and Winifred Babcock, Reynolda House Museum of American Art, 1984.2.9

reynoldahouse.org/collections/object/pool-in-the-woods-lake-george

Thomas Hart Benton (1889-1975), *Huck Finn*, 1936. Lithograph. Gift of Stuart P. Feld, 1987.2.2 reynoldahouse.org/collections/object/huck-finn

Lyonel Feininger (1877-1946), *Rainbow II*, 1928. Oil on canvas. Gift of Charles H. Babcock Sr., 1966.2.13 reynoldahouse.org/collections/object/rainbow-ii

Joseph Stella (1877-1946), *Tree, Cactus, Moon*, c. 1928. Gouache on paper. Gift of Betsy Main Babcock, 1979.2.1 reynoldahouse.org/collections/object/tree-cactus-moon
Depression Era Regionalism xroads.virginia.edu/~ma98/haven/wood/depreg.html

Regionalism siouxcityartcenter.org/collections/category/regionalism.html

Twentieth Century Modernists americanmodernists.org/index.html

Visual Thinking Strategies vtshome.org/what-is-vts

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Materials

- Paper and pencils for sketching, worksheets
- On-site assignment at the museum or access to museum website
- Computer and Digital projector for presentation

Lesson

Students will complete formal analysis of the artwork, undertake research on the artist and artwork, and write an extended description of and/or give a 5-minute multimedia presentation of *Spring Turning* in comparison with another twentieth-century work from the Reynolda House Museum of American Art collection.

First Session

- Facilitate a class discussion of Grant Wood's *Spring Turning* using Visual Thinking Strategy (VTS): What's going on in this painting? What do you see that makes you say that? What else is there?
- Instruct students to individually complete a formal analysis worksheet for *Spring Turning* by Grant Wood.
- Students should then access Reynolda House Museum of American Art's website to pull up information on Grant Wood and *Spring Turning*, reading and take notes of biographical and object information.
- Assign students to work in small groups. Each group will compare the Grant Wood painting to another work (teacher can assign and substitute other works than ones suggested, but must be American art from the time period).

Second Session/Out-of-Class Assignment

- Students should review related online resources in the school's media center or as a home assignment.

Third Session

- After reading the biography and description of the second work, the group should prepare a discussion of Grant Wood's *Spring Turning*, using observational and factual evidence associated with both works of art.
- Each group should make a 5-minute presentation of their analysis, using PowerPoint slides to identify relevant details in the work.
- For a final grade, each student will submit their own written version of their group's interpretation, making sure to include specific points from the looking and writing activities and websites cited (can be assisted by media center staff as necessary).

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Assessments

- Teacher will assess the presentation by answering the question, “How does this painting, *Spring Turning* (1936) by Grant Wood, reflect Regionalist and Modernist tendencies, especially in comparison with another artwork of the same period?”
- Teacher will consider research and preparation, as well as specific visual evidence and historical data cited to support their argument.

NC Standard Course of Study

Visual Arts

Essential Standard: V.1 Use the language of visual arts to communicate effectively

Visual Literacy Strand

BV.1.4 Recognize how Elements of Art and Principles of Design are used in art

IV.1.4 Analyze images through the process of deconstruction (the components of the image and its meaning)

PV.1.4 Evaluate the use of the Elements of Art and Principles of Design in art

AV.1.4 Analyze the compositional components of art.

Contextual Relevancy Strand

Essential Standard: CX.1 Understand the global historical, societal, and cultural contexts of the visual arts

B.CX.1.5 Explain the effect of the geographic location and physical environment on the media and subject matter of art

1.CX.1.3 Classify art by artist, movement and style

P.CX.1.1 Understand the role of visual arts in the United States history as a means of interpreting past eras within an historic context

A.CX.1.1 Interpret visual arts from personal, cultural, and historic contexts