

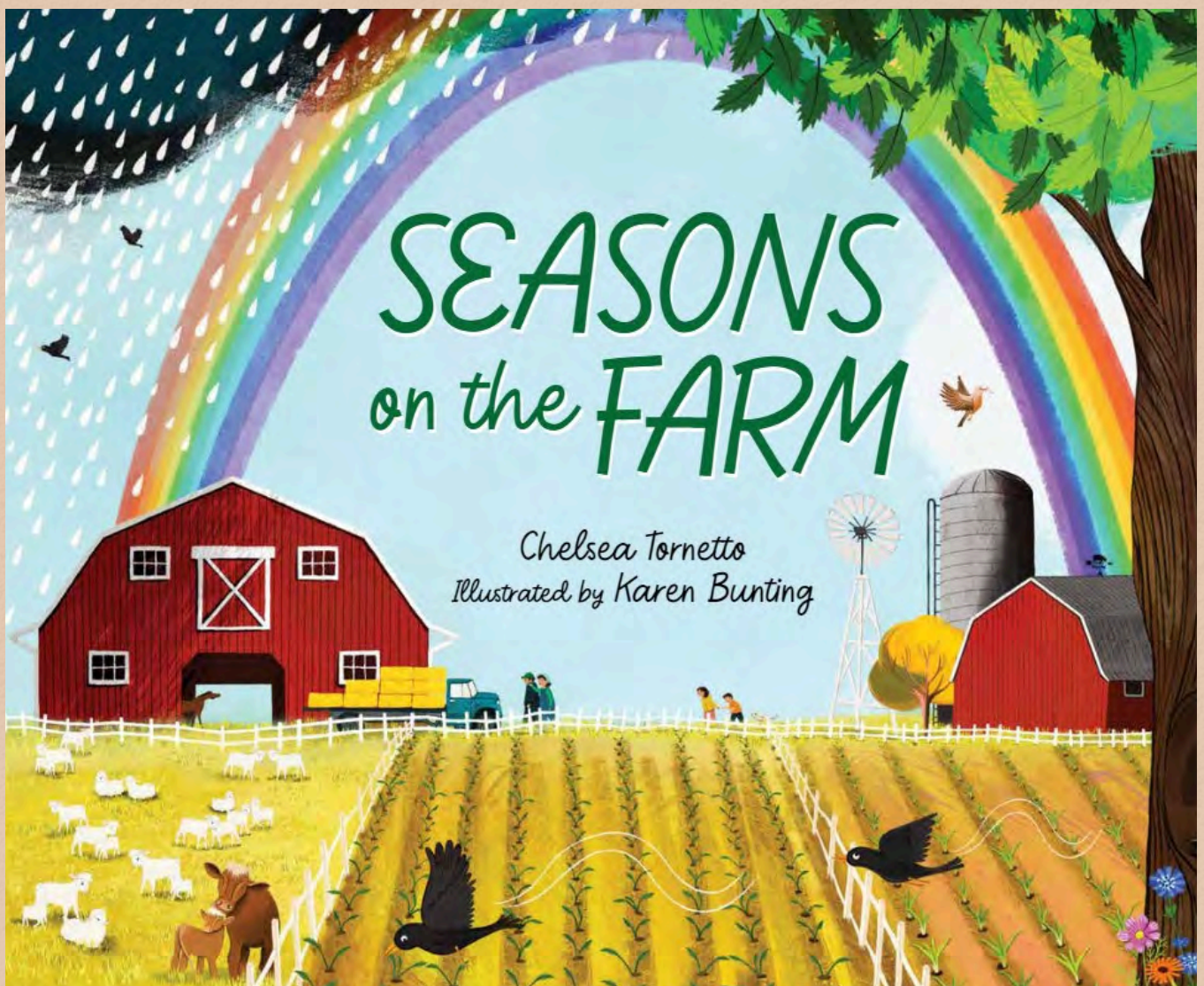
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# SEASONS ON THE FARM

Written by Chelsea Tornetto

Illustrated by Karen Bunting

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SLEEPING BEAR PRESS™

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# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Chelsea Toretto ELA and social studies for 17 years, but now she writes picture books. She is the award-winning author of Gardens Are For Growing (Familius 2022) and God Made You Too (WorthyKids 2022), as well as Seasons on the Farm (Sleeping Bear 2025) and Chalk the Walk (Familius 2025).

She grew up surrounded by corn fields and pigs in southern Illinois where both sides of her family are farmers. She loves porch swings, thunderstorms, and watching combines finish up a field at night.



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# ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

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Karen Bunting is a freelance children's picture book and publications illustrator who lives in Bristol, UK with her partner and two cheeky cats.

She enjoys exploring ways to make her art come to life, using texture, vibrant colours along with thoughtful details for her characters and their surroundings.

When not drawing, Karen loves to be out in nature either hiking or running. She also likes to rummage around in vintage shops looking for little gems.

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# ABOUT THE BOOK

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On a farm, each season arrives with new jobs to do—crops to plant, animals to tend to, and fields to harvest. Readers get an insider’s look at what spring, summer, fall, and winter look like on a family farm, from adorable baby animals to rumbling tractors and pumpkins to pies. This sweet, rhyming story is perfect for young readers, whether their home is on a farm or not!

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# REVIEWS

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“A farm hums with activity all year round. Farmers and their families are never idle, no matter the season. They must keep an eye on the weather so they know when to till the soil, what and when to plant, and when to harvest their crops. They must also closely monitor soil conditions and plantings. They take care of farm animals, who are themselves busy caring for their young; the geese even honk to announce “signs of autumn on the farm.” This delightful book, expressed in sprightly rhymes, bursts with vivid seasonal colors as it offers glimpses of bustling activities outside and inside the farmhouse, not to mention some specialized equipment, vehicles, and buildings, including those that house various wonderful creatures of all sizes that call a farm home. These farmers shear sheep, bake apple pie, move bales of hay, and pay the bills. The richly colored illustrations—some presented as insets or vignettes—provide good hints about the seasons under discussion: bare winter trees, bright green spring leaves, and deep orange fall pumpkins. The human family varies in skin tone.”

“Children will appreciate this charming, insightful book at any season of the year.”

- *Kirkus Reviews*

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

## Before Reading

- What do you know about farms? Brainstorm as many facts as you can!
- Have you ever been on a farm? Or seen one?
- Which season is your favorite? Why?
- Do you think this book is fiction or non-fiction? Why?
- Open the book and lay it upside down the spine facing up. What do you notice about the illustration on the cover?

## During Reading

- When the text describes a “sign of the season,” try to find it in the illustration.
- Notice how the people are dressed in each season. How does their clothing change?
- There are many colors mentioned in the story. What color do YOU think of when you think of spring? Summer? Fall? Winter?
- Farmers produce our food! What foods do you see in the illustrations of the story?
- What does the text mean when it says, “Tiny hints and subtle clues, things you won’t see on the news?”
- What jobs do farmers do in each season? (You can use the backmatter for this one!)

## After Reading

- If you were a farmer, which season do you think you would enjoy the most? Which one would be the hardest?
- A farmer’s job is very different depending on the season or time of year. Can you think of other jobs that are different depending on the season?
- What jobs are the same all year long?
- A lot of farming depends on the weather! Can you find some examples of how a farmer is affected by the weather?
- What are some challenges the farmers faced in the story?
- What are some tools farmers use?

# BE A DETECTIVE!



What are the clues in the book that signal each new season?



## SPRING

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## SUMMER

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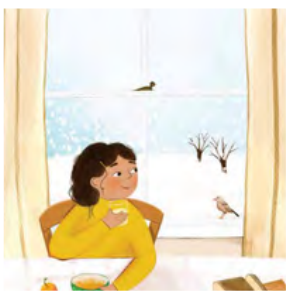


## FALL (AUTUMN)

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## WINTER

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# MAKE A PHENOLOGY WHEEL

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**What is phenology?** Phenology is the study and observation of the natural cycle of the seasons and how it impacts animals and plants.

**What is a phenology wheel?** A phenology wheel is a way to record observations about nature during the seasons or months of the year.

**How to make a phenology wheel:**

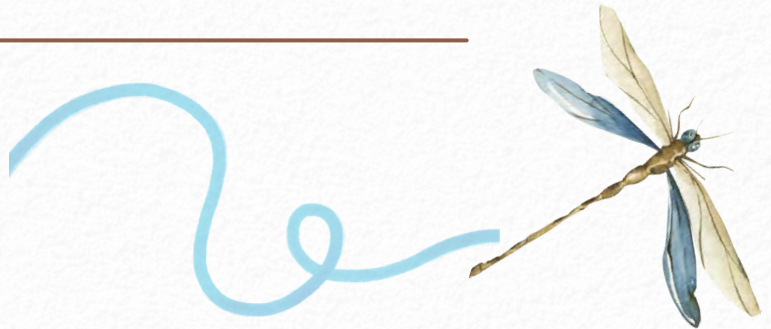
1. Print out one of the templates on the following pages.  
(You can divide the year into seasons or months.)
2. For each month or season, go outside and observe nature. You can go to the park, the woods, or even just your backyard! Use the “Notice Nature” checklist for ideas of what to look for.
3. Record your observations on the wheel by drawing and coloring pictures!
4. Keep your wheel until the next month or season...and repeat!
5. At the end of the year, cut out your wheel and display it! And start a new one! You might notice something new each year!

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# NOTICE NATURE CHECKLIST

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## Things to look for:

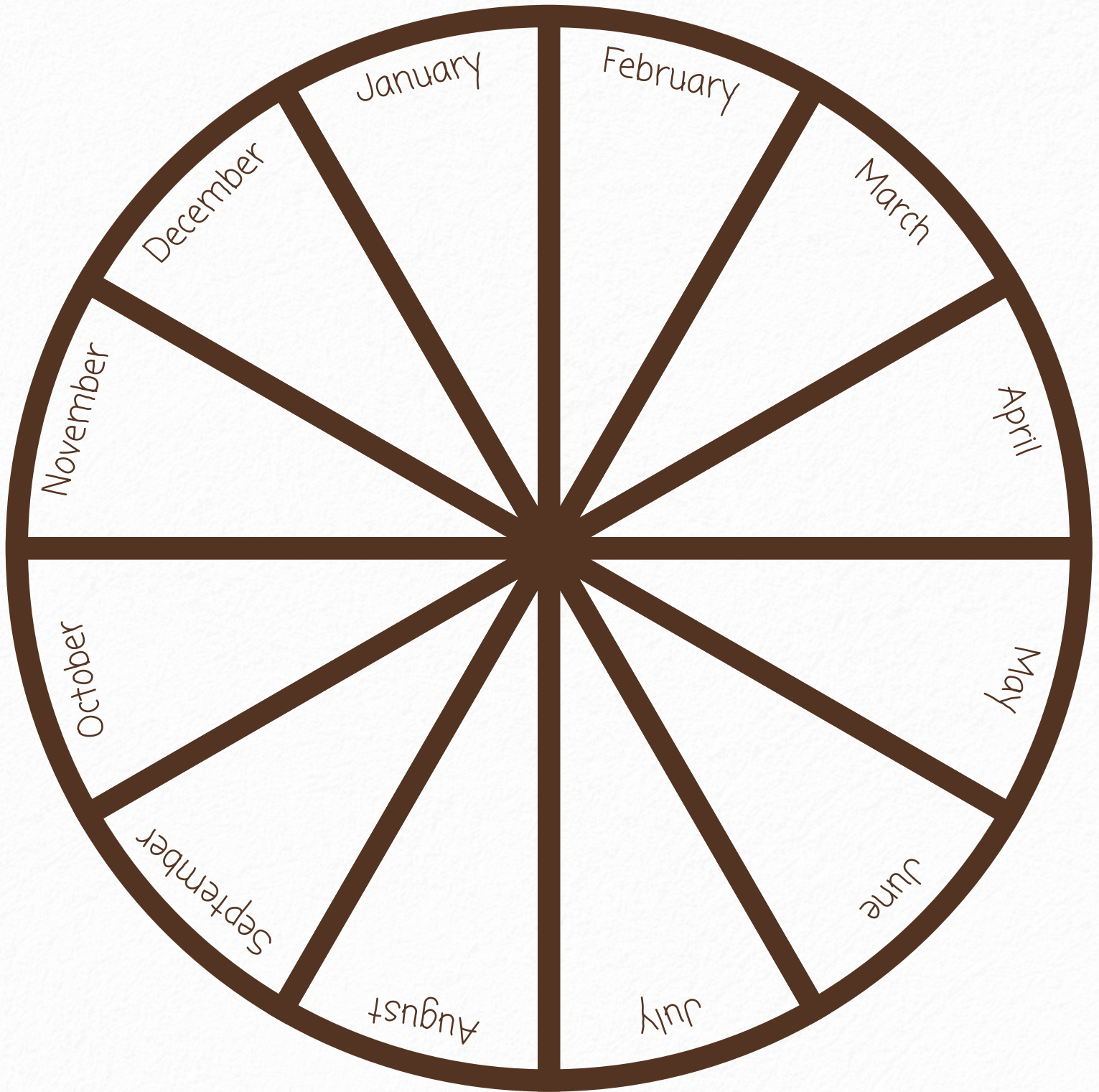


- Look at trees and bushes. What color are the leaves?
- Look at the grass. What color is it?
- Do you see any birds? How many? Watch them for awhile. What are they doing?
- Do you see any insects? What type? How many?
- Do you see any other animals?
- Close your eyes and listen. What sounds do you hear?
- What does the weather feel like? Is it cold? Hot? Windy? Rainy? Cloudy?
- Look at the dirt. Is it muddy or dry? Soft or hard?
- Get down on the ground and look around you. What else do you notice?
- Find a place to sit and count to 50 slowly in your mind. While you count, look around you. What do you notice?

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# MONTHLY PHENOLOGY WHEEL

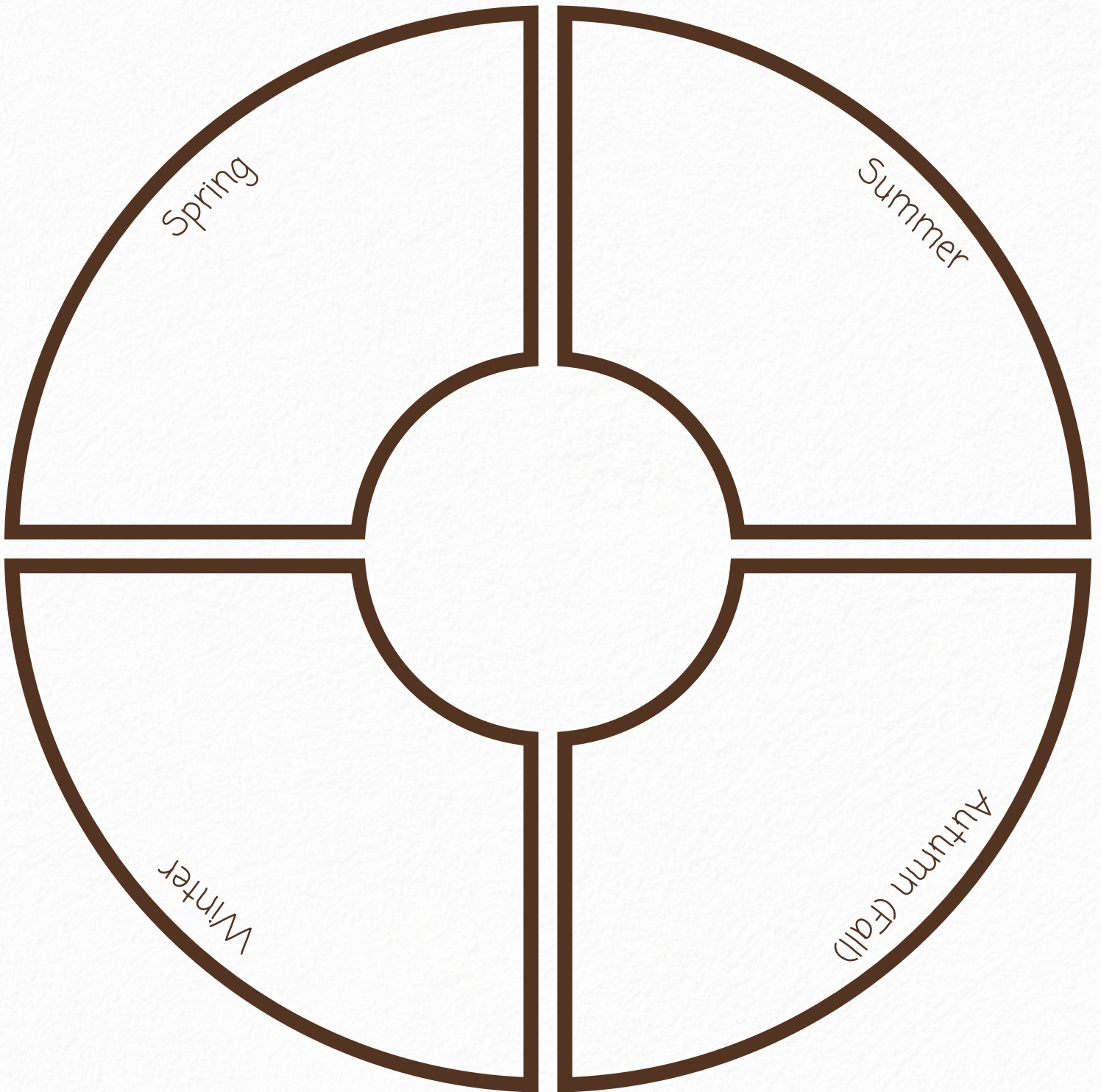
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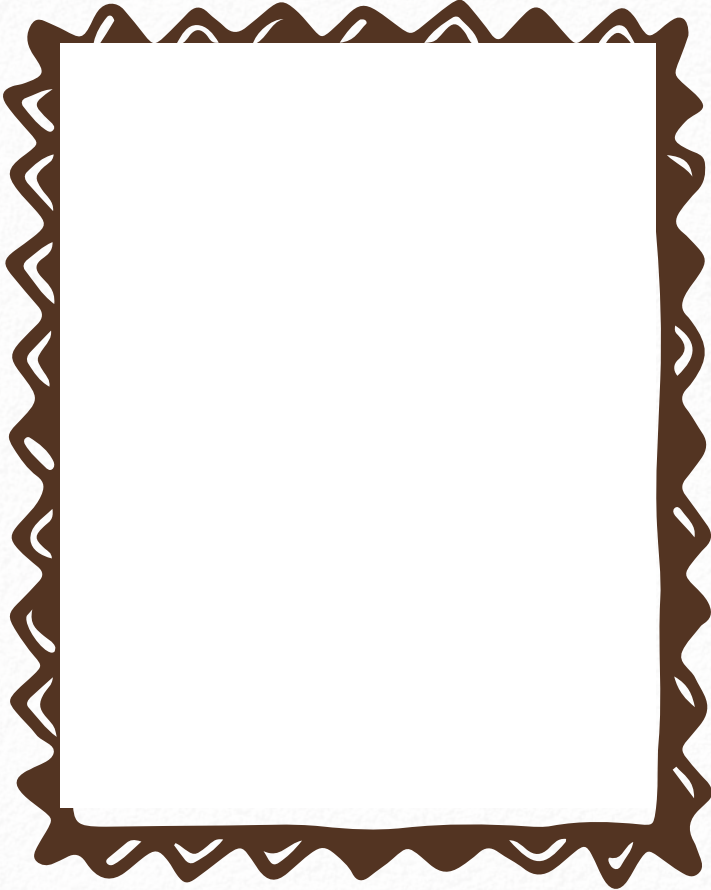
# SEASONAL PHENOLOGY WHEEL

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# INTERVIEW A FARMER!

*My name is:*



*I grow or raise...*

*My favorite thing about farming is...*

*The hardest thing about farming is...*

*My favorite season on the farm is...*

# READ-ALONG SCAVENGER HUNT

**Instructions:** Farmers have to pay close attention to notice the signs of the seasons! Practice paying close attention, like a farmer. As you read the story, look for each item in the illustrations. When you find it, check it off the list.

- a robin with a worm in its mouth
- roots of a plant
- a yellow butterfly
- a four wheeler
- a brown horse
- a blue ribbon
- a wooden spoon
- a green combine
- flying geese
- a windmill
- a blue coffee mug
- a calculator
- a fuzzy caterpillar
- a rainbow
- a tire swing



**BONUS:** How many blackbirds can you find?



# DRESS THE FARMER FOR

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(SEASON)



# OLD WIVES TALES



Farmers use knowledge and superstitions that are passed down from generation to generation to help them know “when to harvest plow and sow!” Some are true...and some haven’t been proven. Here are a few! What do you think? Do you believe them?

- Cows will lay down before bad weather.
- If you cut open a persimmon seed and see a spoon shape, it means a snowy winter is coming!
- The more black on a “wooly worm” caterpillar, the colder and harsher the winter will be.
- Hanging a horseshoe over your barn door will bring good luck.
- If your chicken lays a double-yolked egg, someone might be getting married soon...or having twins!
- To (successfully) grow hot peppers, one must get mad while planting them.
- Plant corn when the oak leaves are as big as a squirrel’s ear.
- Frost is out of the ground when you hear the first frogs.

**Find more here:**

<https://www.farmcollector.com/farm-life/folk-beliefs-and-old-wives-tales/>

# FARMING THROUGH THE SEASONS

(Grades 3-5)

**Backmatter** is what publishers call the interesting facts and other non-fiction information at the back of a book. Use the backmatter on pages 30-31 of *Seasons on the Farm* to answer these questions.

1. How many seasons are there in most of the United States? (Hint: Count the colored headings!) \_\_\_\_\_

2. The study of the natural cycle of the seasons and how it impacts animals and plants is called \_\_\_\_\_.

3. Farmers plant seeds in the spring. What two things could cause the seeds to not germinate?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

4. Why do you think sheep are sheared in the spring?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. What two things do farmers apply to their fields to keep their crops healthy in the summer?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

6. What do farmers sometimes have to do if it doesn't rain enough?

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Farmers harvest grain when it is \_\_\_\_\_ so it can safely be stored for the winter.

8. What crop do farmers sometimes plant in fall that stays dormant until the next spring? \_\_\_\_\_

9. Give two examples of how farmers care for their livestock in the winter.

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

10. What do farmers do during the winter months to prepare for the next year?

- \_\_\_\_\_

# SCHOOL VISITS

As a former veteran educator, I love being in the classroom, and I'd love to come talk to your students about farming, seasons, or writing and publishing! I offer both in-person and virtual school visits. For more information check out my website!



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## CHECK OUT MY OTHER BOOKS!

