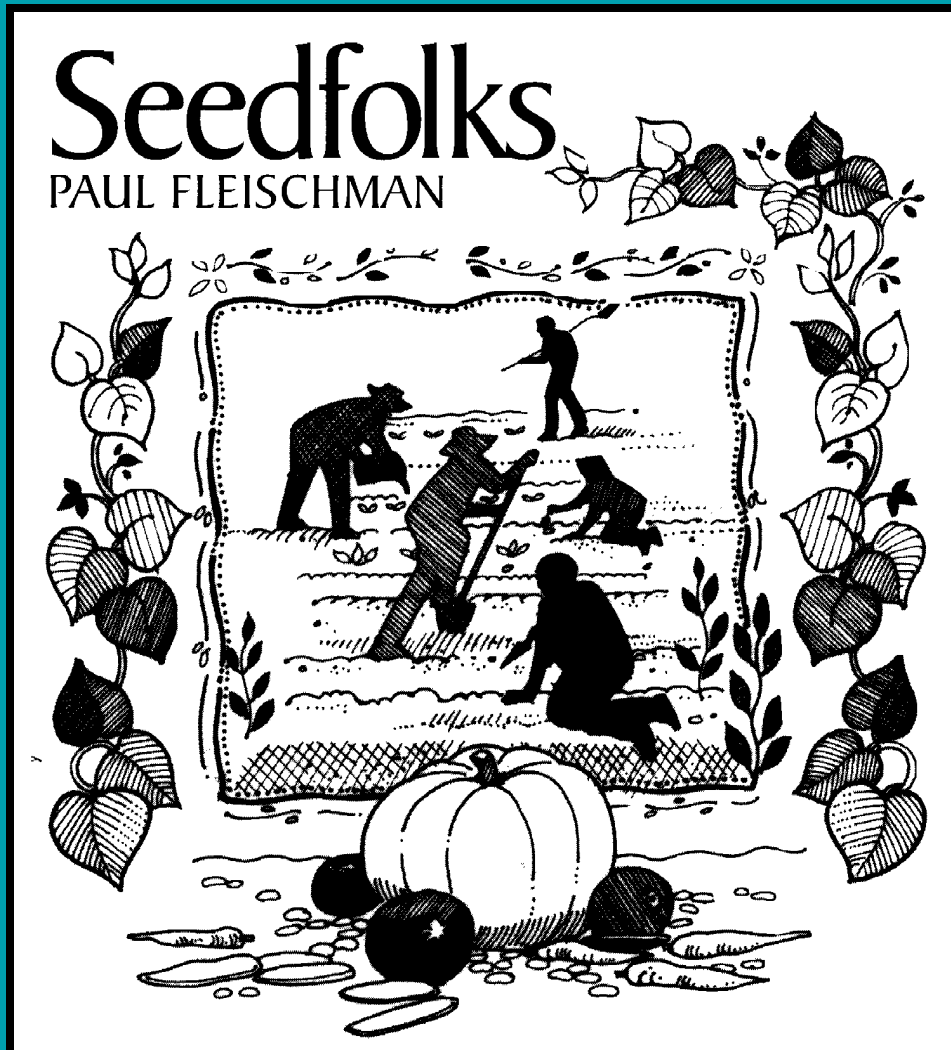


Novel·Ties



# Seedfolks

PAUL FLEISCHMAN

A Study Guide  
Written By Carol Alexander  
Edited by Joyce Friedland and Rikki Kessler

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## For the Teacher

This reproducible study guide to use in conjunction with the novel *Seedfolks* consists of lessons for guided reading. Written in chapter-by-chapter format, the guide contains a synopsis, pre-reading activities, vocabulary and comprehension exercises, as well as extension activities to be used as follow-up to the novel.

In a homogeneous classroom, whole class instruction with one title is appropriate. In a heterogeneous classroom, reading groups should be formed: each group works on a different novel at its own reading level. Depending upon the length of time devoted to reading in the classroom, each novel, with its guide and accompanying lessons, may be completed in three to six weeks.

Begin using NOVEL-TIES for reading development by distributing the novel and a folder to each child. Distribute duplicated pages of the study guide for students to place in their folders. After examining the cover and glancing through the book, students can participate in several pre-reading activities. Vocabulary questions should be considered prior to reading a chapter; all other work should be done after the chapter has been read. Comprehension questions can be answered orally or in writing. The classroom teacher should determine the amount of work to be assigned, always keeping in mind that readers must be nurtured and that the ultimate goal is encouraging students' love of reading.

The benefits of using NOVEL-TIES are numerous. Students read good literature in the original, rather than in abridged or edited form. The good reading habits, formed by practice in focusing on interpretive comprehension and literary techniques, will be transferred to the books students read independently. Passive readers become active, avid readers.

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## SYNOPSIS

Told in the first person by a series of different people who each add a piece to the story, *Seedfolks* tells how an abandoned junk-filled lot in a big city becomes a flourishing garden. The carefully structured book first presents a young girl from Vietnam named Kim who plants a handful of lima beans in the neglected soil. A neighbor, Ana, sees the girl burying something in the ground and investigates. When Ana and her friend Wendell discover that Kim has been planting seeds, they want to help make the plants grow. Soon, other people help to clean up and take care of the old lot, and begin to plant vegetables and flowers. Some of the gardeners are young, some are old, and many speak a foreign language. Most of them have been lonely and have had troubles to overcome. Working in the garden is a productive way of working through their problems.

That is how the garden on Gibb Street begins. People like Gonzalo's Tío Juan and an invalid named Mr. Myles find a sense of purpose and dignity as they labor to make things grow. Two older residents of the block, Laura and Sam, find new energy and new causes to champion as they attempt to clean up the earth. In the process they clear up misunderstandings between people of different backgrounds. As these miracles slowly unfold, the gardeners find that they have become a real community.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Paul Fleischman was born on September 5, 1952, in Monterey, California. His father was the award-winning author, Sid Fleischman. When Paul Fleischman was growing up, his father often read to him, giving him a life-long love of literature. The family owned a printing press, which inspired Paul to see his own work in print. As a child, he enjoyed listening to a short-wave radio, tuning into stations around the world. This helped develop his appreciation of different languages and cultures. Readers can see his love of foreign and native words in his poetry and his fiction.

As an adult, Paul Fleischman attended college at the University of California at Berkeley and the University of New Mexico, majoring in English. He also traveled widely, gaining new insights and experiences. Before he became a professional writer, he worked as a bookstore clerk and proofreader.

Paul Fleischman explains that his books involve a good deal of writing and rewriting by hand. Sometimes, he will spend an entire day working on one page of a manuscript. He explores many subjects in his writing, but is especially drawn to topics about history, nature, and personal growth.

He has received many awards for his writing, including the Newbery Medal for a collection of poetry, *Joyful Noise*; the Silver Medal for *The Half-a-Moon Inn*; and the Boston Globe-Horn Book Award for *Saturnalia*.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### Immigration and Ethnicity

America has been called a nation of immigrants. People have come here from all over the world to find new lives and employment. The first great wave of immigration began around 1870. Since that time, nearly 7.4 million people have entered the United States. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, they came from such far-flung places as Great Britain, Ireland, Eastern Europe, Scandinavia, Germany, Canada, and China. In later years, large numbers of immigrants have also come from Vietnam, Korea, Haiti, Mexico, India, Pakistan, Russia, and the Caribbean.

The Midwest shows a typical pattern of immigration. At one time, the city of Cleveland, where *Seedfolks* is set, had a large population of Catholic immigrants who came from Poland, Lithuania, Rumania, Ireland, Italy, and Germany. Then Mexican-Americans from Texas went to the Midwest to work in factories, in agriculture, and on the railroads. Later still, large numbers of people from Vietnam and China came to the city.

Each ethnic group tended to settle in one area of the city. They established shops that sold their native foods and goods. Many continued to speak their own languages, while working hard to learn English. Often, they did not earn as much money as they had expected when they came to America. They lived in the poorer neighborhoods, moving on if they were successful. As Ana says in the novel, her part of town is “like a cheap hotel—you stay until you’ve got enough money to leave.”

The city of Cleveland has been referred to as a community of two halves, black and white. Actually, there are many ethnic neighborhoods in the city. We meet some of the people from these communities in *Seedfolks*.

## PRE-READING ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Preview the book by reading the title and the author's name and by looking at the illustration on the cover. What do you think the book will be about? What do you think the word "seedfolks" could mean? Have you read anything else by the same author? Thumb through the book and notice the chapter headings. Why do you think the author has used people's names instead of numbers to delineate chapters?
2. **Social Studies Connection:** What do you know about immigration to the United States? What would you like to find out? Brainstorm with a small group of your classmates to fill in a K-W-L chart, such as the one below. Read the Background Information on page two of this study guide and jot down what you already know in the first column. List your questions in the second column. When you finish the book, record what you learned in the third column.

Immigrants in the United States		
What I Know -K-	What I Want to Know -W-	What I Learned -L-

3. Have you read any other books or stories that deal with the lives of immigrants in recent times? Jot down whatever you can remember from your reading. When you have finished reading *Seedfolks*, compare the facts in your notes to those facts that you have discovered while reading this novel.
4. **Cooperative Learning Activity:** Work with a small cooperative learning group to list and discuss ways in which people can help each other in daily life. As you read this book, notice how the characters get along and form helpful relationships with one another.
5. A stereotype is an oversimplified image of a certain person, or group of people usually held in common by some part of society. Do you or members of your family hold any views that stereotype others? How can stereotypes be harmful to both the believer and the victim? Why do you think stereotypes develop? How can they be eliminated?
6. Many of the characters in this book have experienced loneliness. Often, that is a result of their having retired from jobs that kept them involved with other people. What could an older person do to reconnect with the world?
7. **Social Studies Connection:** The setting of the story is Cleveland, Ohio. Find out more about this large city. Using a map, find Cleveland Heights. See what you can discover about the cultural or ethnic makeup of the area. You might find this information by using the Internet or by reading books or articles, including travel guides.
8. Do some research to learn about community gardens. Who usually plants and maintains these gardens? Are there rules about the use of the land? What happens if a business wants to take over the lot? Are there any community gardens on abandoned land near you?

## Pre-Reading Activities and Discussion Questions (cont.)

9. Write “Yes” or “No” next to each statement in the “Before You Read” column of the following Anticipation Guide. When you finish the book, see if any of your opinions have changed as you fill in the “After You Read” column.

### ANTICIPATION GUIDE

Statement	Before You Read	After You Read
1. People who live in poverty-stricken neighborhoods will never work cooperatively to improve their lives.		
2. A garden requires a great deal of work and offers little in return.		
3. Individuals are always judged by racial and ethnic stereotypes.		
4. People should be judged by who they are, not by stereotypes.		
5. People who live in the city are never as friendly as those who live in a small town.		
6. America is a place where people of many different races, ethnic groups, and religions blend together harmoniously.		
7. People of different races, ethnic groups, and religions can never become one harmonious community.		
8. A garden can bring joy and a sense of community to those who work within its borders.		

## Pre-Reading Activities and Discussion Questions (cont.)

10. As you read about each of the people presented in *Seedfolks* fill in the character chart below. Be sure to take notes on each person's family background, country of origin, interests, and personality traits.

Character	About the Character
Kim	
Ana	
Wendell	
Gonzalo	
Leona	
Sam	
Virgil	
Sae Young	
Curtis	
Nora	
Maricella	
Amir	
Florence	

**KIM, ANA**

**Vocabulary:** Draw a line from each word on the left to its definition on the right. Then use the numbered words to fill in the blanks in the sentences below.

- |                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| 1. stern        | a. empty; unused                                    |
| 2. altar        | b. grow vigorously; make steady progress            |
| 3. vacant       | c. with distrust                                    |
| 4. thrive       | d. strict; unsympathetic                            |
| 5. suspiciously | e. elevated structure used for religious ceremonies |

- .....
1. My brother and I hoped a family with children our ages would move into the \_\_\_\_\_ house next door.
  2. Many kinds of plants \_\_\_\_\_ in the hot, moist rain forest.
  3. In some cultures, people place food and gifts around a(n) \_\_\_\_\_ to honor someone who has died.
  4. The judge wore a(n) \_\_\_\_\_ expression when he read the guilty verdict.
  5. My teacher looked \_\_\_\_\_ at me when I said I had lost my homework.

Read to find out why Kim plants seeds.
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**Questions:**

1. Why did Kim stand before the family altar? How did this make her feel?
2. What evidence revealed that Kim and Ana lived in a poor neighborhood?
3. Why did Kim suffer from the cold in April?
4. Why did Kim plant the lima bean seeds in the vacant lot? Why did she choose this time for her project?
5. What has happened to Ana's neighborhood since she was a child? Why did Ana stay in her old neighborhood?
6. Why did Ana dig up Kim's bean seeds? How did she feel when she realized what she had done?

**Questions for Discussion:**

1. How do you imagine Kim feels about her life in this strange new city?
2. Why do you think Ana bought binoculars?
3. Do you think Kim and Ana will meet?



## Kim, Ana (cont.)

### Literary Devices:

- I. *Personification*—Personification is a literary device in which an author grants human qualities to nonhuman objects. For example:

An icy wind teetered trash cans and turned my cheeks to marble.

What is being personified?

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What does this reveal about the narrator's feelings?

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- II. *Simile*—A simile is a figure of speech in which two unlike objects are compared using the words “like” or “as.” For example:

It's [Ana's neighborhood] like a cheap hotel—you stay until you've got enough money to leave.

What is being compared?

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Why is this an apt comparison?

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### Literary Element: Characterization

Fill in notes about Kim and Ana on the character chart that appears on page five of this study guide. Compare your notes with those of your classmates.

### Social Studies Connection:

On a world map, locate Vietnam. Do some research to learn how people live and work in rural Vietnam. Then compare the lifestyle of a person from the Vietnamese countryside with that of a city dweller in the United States. Bring some photographs of Vietnam into class.

### Writing Activity:

Kim misses her father, and her feelings of grief and loss motivate her actions to do something special. Is there someone in your life who has inspired you to do something you have never done before? Write about this person and his or her influence on you.

## WENDELL, GONZALO

**Vocabulary:** Use the context to help you determine the meaning of the underlined word in each of the following sentences. Then check your definition with a dictionary definition.

1. If you move while you take a snapshot, it will not be in focus.

Your definition \_\_\_\_\_

Dictionary definition \_\_\_\_\_

2. Making a gesture that signified “stop,” I hoped to prevent my friend from crossing a busy street against the light.

Your definition \_\_\_\_\_

Dictionary definition \_\_\_\_\_

3. If you forget to add fresh water to the flowers in the vase, they will wilt and then die.

Your definition \_\_\_\_\_

Dictionary definition \_\_\_\_\_

4. The clothing, food, and customs of teenagers living in the city seemed weird to the girl who had always lived in the country.

Your definition \_\_\_\_\_

Dictionary definition \_\_\_\_\_

5. Use a trowel to plant seeds in the backyard.

Your definition \_\_\_\_\_

Dictionary definition \_\_\_\_\_

Read to find out how the garden affected Tío Juan.

### Questions:

1. Why were Ana and Wendell important to one another?
2. Why did Ana and Wendell try so hard to save Kim’s bean plants?
3. How did the idea of a garden affect Wendell’s personal life?
4. What did Gonzalo mean when he said, “The older you are, the younger you get when you move to the United States”?
5. How did Gonzalo’s mother show that she understood Tío Juan’s needs?
6. What caused Tío Juan to change “from a baby back into a man”?

## Wendell, Gonzalo (cont.)

### Questions for Discussion:

1. Why did Wendell recall the biblical passage, “And a little child shall lead them”?
2. Tío Juan spoke a dialect that people in his new community did not understand. How do you think he felt when he was unable to express himself through language? What else did Tío Juan have to get used to in this foreign city?
3. Why do you think Gonzalo was embarrassed by his father and his uncle?
4. What do you think Gonzalo learned from watching Tío Juan working in the lot? How did his feelings about this older relative change?

### Literary Device: Point of View

Point of view in literature refers to the person telling the story. This person is called the narrator. The narrator might be the author or a character in the story. From whose point of view is each story told?

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Why do you think the author keeps changing the point of view?

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### Literary Element: Characterization

Return to the character chart on page five of this study guide and add notes about Wendell and Gonzalo.

### Writing Activity/Art Connection:

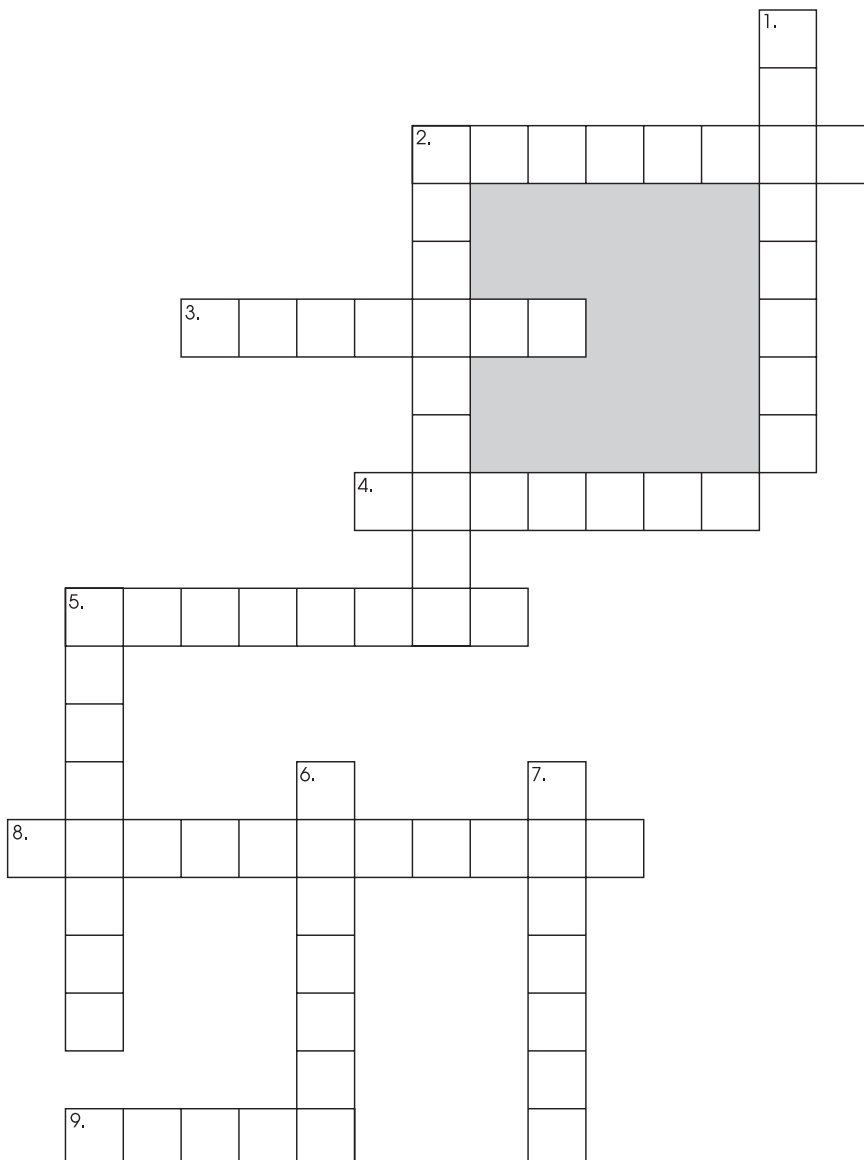
*Seedfolks* tells the story of people who are trying to bring new life to a piece of their city. Browse through some magazines and newspapers and find illustrations that depict life in the place where you live. Cut them out and arrange the illustrations in a collage. Then write a description of the place in your collage.

## LEONA, SAM

**Vocabulary:** Use the words in the Word Box and the clues below to complete the crossword puzzle.

**WORD BOX**

compromised  
coolies  
crops  
garbage  
mention  
obituary  
officials  
pacifism  
paradise  
personal  
retired

**Across**

2. biography of someone who has died
3. refer to casually
4. trash
5. opposition to war in general
8. agreed to give up some demands
9. foods that are grown

**Down**

1. perfect place
2. authorities; people in charge
5. private
6. Asian workers; peasants
7. no longer working

## Leona, Sam (cont.)

Read to find out why Sam becomes critical of the garden.

### Questions:

1. Why did Leona want to plant goldenrod?
2. How did the city officials react to Leona's telephone calls?
3. What did Leona mean when she observed, "You can't measure the distance between my block and City Hall in miles"?
4. Why did Leona bring a bag of garbage from the lot to the Public Health Department?
5. What kind of work did Sam do before he retired? In what ways did he continue to work toward the same goal?
6. Why did the gardeners have to work so hard to keep the soil moist?
7. What did Sam mean when he said, "The garden was a copy of the neighborhood"?

### Questions for Discussion:

1. Why do you imagine the city officials allowed garbage to pile up in the vacant lot? Why was this a health problem for people in that community?
2. Sam first compared the garden to Paradise, but at the end of the chapter said, "the garden was turning back into Cleveland." Why did Sam's feelings about the garden change?
3. How do you think Sam might promote better harmony among the gardeners?

### Literary Devices:

- I. *Analogy*—An analogy is a comparison of two or more similar objects which suggest that if they are alike in certain aspects, they will probably be alike in other ways as well. For example:

You ever watch a sax player close? They push down a key and way at the other end of the instrument something moves. That's what I was looking for—the key that would make that trash disappear.

Why did Leona make this comparison?

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## Leona, Sam (cont.)

- II. *Irony*—Irony refers to a situation that turns out to be the opposite of what is expected. What is ironic about the long life of Leona’s grandmother?

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### Literary Element: Characterization

Fill in information about Leona and Sam on the character chart on page five of this study guide.

### Social Studies Connection:

An ethnic group is a group of people with a common religion, race, nationality, or culture. A town or city is usually made up of a number of such groups. Often, people of one ethnic group will cluster in a particular neighborhood. Ethnic groups may have their own special kinds of food, language, worship, and other traditions. There are many good reasons to preserve an ethnic identity. Unfortunately, it is also true that members of different ethnic groups may distrust and keep themselves apart from others.

Do some firsthand research about your own town or city. Notice the names of restaurants, shops, churches, schools, and other organizations in each area. What languages are spoken there? What ethnic groups comprise your community?

### Writing Activities:

1. Write a description of the neighborhood in which you live. Include details that show what the neighborhood looks like and who lives there. Mention special features of the area, such as its parks, lakes or seaports, museums, and shopping centers.
2. Have you ever tried to solve a problem or settle a quarrel that involves other people? What was the problem or dispute? What was the result of your efforts to make peace? Write a story about this experience.

## VIRGIL, SAE YOUNG

**Vocabulary:** Analogies are equations in which the first pair of words has the same relationship as the second pair of words. For example, FRIEND is to ENEMY as TRUE is to FALSE. Both sets of words are opposites. Use the words in the Word Box to complete the analogies below.

<i>WORD BOX</i>				
coincidence	extended	humid	plantation	pronounced

1. ASKED is to QUESTIONED as STATED is to \_\_\_\_\_.
2. WATERMELON is to FRUIT as \_\_\_\_\_ is to FARM.
3. RETRACTED is to \_\_\_\_\_ as RACED is to WANDERED
4. \_\_\_\_\_ is to ACCIDENT as CONTEST is to COMPETITION.
5. DESERT is to DRY as SWAMP is to \_\_\_\_\_.

Read to find out how the garden is creating a community.

### Questions:

1. Why did Virgil's father lie to Miss Fleck?
2. How did Miss Fleck respond to the lie?
3. Why did the lettuce crop fail?
4. Why did Sae Young become afraid of people? How did working in the garden help Sae Young overcome her fear?
5. Why was the use of the funnels the best idea for gathering water?

### Questions for Discussion:

1. What lesson might be learned from Virgil's father's failed garden?
2. What is there about a garden that could be good for so many different people?

### Literary Device: Symbolism

A symbol in literature is an object, event, or person that represents an idea or a set of ideas. What do you think the locket that Virgil found might symbolize?

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## Virgil, Sae Young (cont.)

### Literary Elements:

- I. *Conflict*—A conflict is a struggle between two opposing forces. An external conflict is a character’s struggle against an outside force, such as nature or another person. An internal struggle takes place in a character’s own mind. Use a chart, such as the one below, to list the conflicts that have occurred in the story up to this point. Under “Resolutions,” note whether each conflict has been resolved, or settled. You can add to the chart as you read.

<b>External Conflicts</b>	<b>Resolutions</b>
<b>Internal Conflicts</b>	<b>Resolutions</b>

- II. *Characterization*—Return to the character chart on page five of this study guide. Fill in information about Virgil and Sae Young. Also, add any more information that you may have learned about the other characters.

### Writing Activities:

1. Was there ever a time when you started a project that ended badly? Why do you think your idea did not work? What would you do differently if you tackled this project again? Write a paragraph in which you compare and contrast what you actually did with what you should have done.
2. Relate a real or imagined experience with a garden. Tell where you did your planting, what you planted, and how well the garden grew.



**CURTIS, NORA**

**Vocabulary:** Synonyms are words with similar meanings. Draw a line from each word in column A to its synonym in column B. Then use the words in column A to fill in the blanks in the sentences below.

<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>
1. solitary	a. fragrance
2. haphazard	b. stately
3. customary	c. usual
4. aroma	d. disorganized
5. refuge	e. shelter
6. dignified	f. alone

.....

- We took \_\_\_\_\_ from the storm in an empty building.
- We awakened to the clatter of breakfast dishes and the \_\_\_\_\_ of coffee brewing.
- It is \_\_\_\_\_ to wear a cap and gown at your graduation ceremony.
- Wearing a suit and tie, you will appear more \_\_\_\_\_ than if you wore jeans and a tee shirt.
- After a fire destroyed the entire house, we were grateful for the \_\_\_\_\_ family photograph that remained.
- Despite our \_\_\_\_\_ attempts at shopping and food preparation, the dinner was a success.

Read to find out how the community of gardeners continued to grow.

**Questions:**

- Why did Curtis plant tomatoes in the lot?
- How did Curtis and Royce help each other?
- Why did Nora call Mr. Myles's work in the garden "a mind altering drug"?
- How did Mr. Myles and Nora become an accepted part of the Gibb Street gardening community?

## Curtis, Nora (cont.)

### Questions for Discussion:

Why do you think the experience of gardening benefitted all the characters in the story?  
What are some ways that working with growing things can be good for a person?

### Literary Device: Metaphor

A metaphor is an implied or suggested comparison between two unlike objects. For example:

He [Mr. Myles] was a salmon traveling upstream through his past.

What is being compared?

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What does this comparison reveal about Mr. Myles?

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### Literary Element: Characterization

Return to the character chart on page five of this study guide. Add information about Curtis and Nora. Work with a partner to compare information about the characters you have read about so far.

### Writing Activities:

1. Imagine that you are Lateesha, observing Curtis at work in the garden. Write a journal entry in which you express your thoughts and feelings about Curtis and his project.
2. If Mr. Myles could still speak, what do you think he would say to Nora about the time they spend in the city garden? Write a dialogue that might have taken place between these two characters.

**MARICELA, AMIR, FLORENCE**

**Vocabulary:** Use the context to help you select the best meaning for the underlined word in each of the following sentences. Circle the letter of the answer you chose.

- Alaska is a vast state, occupying 586,412 square miles of land.  
a. huge                      b. fascinating                      c. popular                      d. dangerous
- When Alice visited the queen in her palace, she observed the rules of decorum.  
a. adults                      b. games                      c. conduct                      d. royalty
- Word of the pilot's exploit soon made him a national hero.  
a. new airplane              b. daring deed                      c. serious problem              d. insult
- Tiny plants sprang through the crevices in the pavement.  
a. holes                      b. coarse cement                      c. pebbles                      d. narrow cracks
- Good health is a benefit of a balanced diet.  
a. cause                      b. problem                      c. advantage                      d. hazard

Read to find out how the garden changed an entire community.

**Questions:**

- Why did Maricela feel like an outcast?
- How did Maricela become involved in the community garden?
- Why did Maricela “tune out” advice about giving birth and raising children?
- What evidence showed that Maricela was beginning to appreciate the garden?
- Why was Amir critical of America?
- How did the garden change Amir’s perception of America?
- Why did Amir retell the story of the Polish woman who had been in a concentration camp?
- What did Florence mean by “seedfolks”? What two ways could you explain this word in terms of the story?
- Why did Florence think that spring was a special season?

## Maricela, Amir, Florence (cont.)

### Questions for Discussion:

1. Why do you think Leona told Maricela that she was part of a “system”?
2. How had stereotypes damaged the lives of people who lived near Gibb Street?
3. Can you think of anything besides a garden that could have united the community and brought joy to so many people’s lives?
4. Why do you think the author chose to end the book with Florence’s story? How does this narrative serve to connect all the separate stories in *Seedfolks*?

### Literary Device: Simile

What is being compared in the following simile?

The ground was back, and last year’s leaves, like a bookmark showing where you’d left off.

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Why is this an apt comparison?

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### Literary Element: Theme

The theme of a literary work is the author’s main idea or message. What do you think are the most important themes of *Seedfolks*? What does this writer believe about hope, cooperation, friendship, and survival? Make a list of these significant themes. Explain how the author works these themes into the novel.

### Writing Activity:

Select a pair of characters in the story who do not seem to have much in common, such as Ana and Maricela, or Curtis and Wendell. Write a dialogue that shows what each might have said to the other on the day of the harvest festival.

## CLOZE ACTIVITY

The following passage has been taken from Sam's story. Read the entire passage before filling in the blanks. Then, reread the passage and select words that make sense. Finally, you may compare your words with those of the author.

You've seen fishermen mending the rips in their nets. That's what I do, only with \_\_\_\_\_<sup>1</sup>. I used to try to patch \_\_\_\_\_<sup>2</sup> the whole world. For thirty-six years \_\_\_\_\_<sup>3</sup> worked for different groups, promoting world \_\_\_\_\_<sup>4</sup>, setting up conferences on pacifism, raising \_\_\_\_\_<sup>5</sup>, stuffing envelopes. Not that I've given \_\_\_\_\_<sup>6</sup> the fight. I've just switched battlefields, \_\_\_\_\_<sup>7</sup> the entire planet to this corner \_\_\_\_\_<sup>8</sup> Cleveland. Sometimes I think I've actually \_\_\_\_\_<sup>9</sup> more effect on the world since \_\_\_\_\_<sup>10</sup> retired. What do I do? I smile \_\_\_\_\_<sup>11</sup> people, especially black people and the \_\_\_\_\_<sup>12</sup> from different countries. I get 'em \_\_\_\_\_<sup>13</sup> up at me instead of down \_\_\_\_\_<sup>14</sup> off to the side. I start \_\_\_\_\_<sup>15</sup> conversations in lines and on the \_\_\_\_\_<sup>16</sup> and with cashiers. People see I'm \_\_\_\_\_<sup>17</sup>, no matter what they've heard about \_\_\_\_\_<sup>18</sup> or Jews. If I'm lucky, I get 'em \_\_\_\_\_<sup>19</sup> to each other. Sewing up the rips in the neighborhood.

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## POST-READING ACTIVITIES

1. Return to the Anticipation Guide that you began in the Pre-Reading Activities on page four of this study guide. Write “Yes” or “No” after each of the statements in the “After You Read” column. Did the book cause you to change any of your opinions?
2. Return to the K-W-L chart you began on page three of this study guide. Record what you learned in the third column. Compare your notes with those of your classmates.
3. Return to the character chart you began on page five of this study guide that you have been filling in. Look over the chart and add more information. Compare your responses to those of your classmates.
4. Why do you think the book was titled *Seedfolks*? If you had to choose a different title for the novel, what would it be? Why?
5. **Cooperative Learning Activity:** The characters in *Seedfolks* have a harvest festival. Write a scene for a play that dramatizes what happens at the festival. Then act out your scene with a group of classmates. Or conduct your own class harvest festival in which you feature the foods of various ethnic groups.
6. *Seedfolks* is a novel with many voices. It begins with the young girl named Kim and ends with Florence, an older woman. Why do you think the author chose to open and close the book with the narratives of these two characters?
7. The stories that make up *Seedfolks* are first-person narratives, which means they are told from a particular character’s point of view. Try turning one of these stories into a third-person narrative. Recount what happens to one of the characters using your own observations and ideas. Or write a narrative told by a character whom you create. Tell this character’s story against the setting of the garden.
8. **Art Connection:** Based on the information in the book, draw or paint a picture of the Gibb Street Garden. Include paintings, people, and other details in your artwork.
9. **Science Connection:** If possible, work with your classmates to create a garden of vegetables and/or fruit. You might start the seeds in egg cartons and transplant them to containers or a plot of earth when they become seedlings. Be sure to read the seed packets carefully or do some independent research to learn about the best growing conditions for each variety of plant.
10. Florence remembers that her grandmother’s sampler said, “Be Not Solitary, Be Not Idle.” What do you think these words mean? How do they fit the overall theme of *Seedfolks*?

## SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

- Adler, C.S. *Youn Hee & Me*. Harcourt.
- Carlson, Lori, ed. *Cool Salsa: Bilingual Poems on Growing U in the United States*. Henry Holt.
- Cohen, Barbara. *Make a Wish, Molly*. Random House.
- \* \_\_\_\_\_ . *Molly's Pilgrim*. HarperCollins.
- Fitzhugh, Louise. *Nobody's Family is Going to Change*. Farrar, Straus & Giroux.
- \* Hamilton, Virginia. *M.C. Higgins, The Great*. Simon & Schuster.
- \* \_\_\_\_\_ . *The Planet of Jr. Brown*. Simon & Schuster.
- \_\_\_\_\_ . *Zeely*. Simon & Schuster.
- Hoyt-Goldsmith, Diane. *Hoang Anh: A Vietnamese-American Boy*. Holiday House.
- Huff, Barbara A. *Greening the City Streets: The Story of Community Gardens*. Random House.
- \* Levitin, Sonia. *Journey to America*. Simon & Schuster.
- \* Paterson, Katherine. *The Great Gilly Hopkins*. HarperCollins.
- Richardson, Judith Benet. *First Came the Owl*. Henry Holt.
- \* Ryan, Muñoz. *Esperanza Rising*. Scholastic.
- \* Schmidt, Gary. *Lizzie Bright and the Buckminster Boy*. Random House.
- Siskind, Leda. *The Hopscotch Tree*. Random House.
- Soto, Gary. *Baseball in April and Other Stories*. Harcourt.
- \* Taylor, Mildred. *The Gold Cadillac*. Penguin.

### Some Other Books by Paul Fleischman

- The Borning Room*. HarperCollins.
- Bull Run*. HarperCollins.
- Dateline: Troy*. Candlewick Press.
- Graven Images*. HarperCollins.
- Jim Ugly*. Random House.
- Joyful Noise: Poems for Two Voices*. HarperCollins.
- The Half-a-Moon Inn*. HarperCollins.
- Saturnalia*. HarperCollins.
- Time Train*. HarperCollins.
- Weslandia*. Candlewick Press.
- Whirligig*. Random House.

- \* NOVEL-TIES study guides are available for these titles.

## ANSWER KEY

### Kim, Ana

Vocabulary: 1. d 2. e 3. a 4. b 5. c; 1. vacant 2. thrive 3. altar 4. stern 5. suspiciously

Questions: 1. Kim stood before the family altar because she was trying to remember her father who had died when she was only eight months old. This made her sad. 2. It was clear that Kim and Ana lived in a poor, shabby neighborhood because of the descriptions of trash and tires, rats, and abandoned buildings. 3. Having come from Vietnam's tropical climate, Kim suffered from the relatively cool temperatures of Cleveland in April. 4. Kim planted the lima bean seeds on the anniversary of her father's death because she wanted her father's spirit to see and approve of what she did; her father had been a farmer in his native land and would value Kim's desire to make things grow. 5. Since Ana's childhood, the neighborhood has become poorer; waves of immigrants from different countries have moved in, leaving when they became more prosperous. Ana stayed in her old neighborhood because she did not have the money to move to a wealthier neighborhood; she was retired from her job and lived on her savings. 6. Ana dug up Kim's bean seeds because she thought Kim might be burying something dangerous or illegal. When she realized what she had done, she felt guilty and wanted to repair the damage.

### Wendell, Gonzalo

Vocabulary: 1. focus-centered with clarity 2. gesture-body movement that is expressive of an idea 3. wilt-droop 4. weird-strange; odd 5. trowel-small gardening tool

Questions: 1. Ana and Wendell had a friendship based on concern for each other. They were important to one another because each lived alone and had nobody else to turn to for help or company. 2. Ana and Wendell tried hard to save Kim's bean plants because they saw how important the plants were to Kim; they were also moved by the child's desire to make something grow in an abandoned patch of earth in the city. 3. When Wendell discovered that Kim was working in the lot, he was able to put aside his grief and loneliness to make something beautiful; he felt now that he could change something for the better. 4. When Gonzalo said, "The older you are, the younger you get when you move to the United States," he meant that for an adult who loses the ability to communicate and work, moving to this new country could mean giving up independence and authority. This could make an adult feel like a helpless child. 5. Gonzalo's mother showed that she understood Tío Juan's needs by ordering her son to take Tío Juan back to the vacant lot so that he could garden; she knew that as a farmer, he yearned to make things grow. 6. Tío Juan changed "from a baby back into a man" when he got the chance to do what he did best: make things grow in the earth. When he was able to work, he regained his sense of self and purpose.

### Leona, Sam

Vocabulary: Across-2. obituary 3. mention 4. garbage 5. pacifism 8. compromised 9. crops; Down-1. paradise 2. officials 5. personal 6. coolies 7. retired

Questions: 1. Leona wanted to plant a patch of goldenrod in the lot as a reminder of her grandmother who attributed her longevity to goldenrod tea. 2. When Leona called the city officials to complain about the stench of the garbage piled up in the vacant lot, she was passed from one official to the next, but received no help with her problem. 3. When Leona observed, "You can't measure the distance between my block and City Hall in miles," she meant that the poor neighborhood she lived in was far from the thoughts of the public officials, and that the gap between poor and wealthy people was very wide. 4. Leona brought a bag of garbage from the lot to the Public Health Department to shock the officials into action; she knew that if they experienced the problem for themselves, they would be more likely to send workers to clean up the lot. 5. Before he retired, Sam worked for organizations that sought world peace. He still worked toward that goal by encouraging friendly communication between people and deliberately ignoring their fears and prejudices. 6. The gardeners had to work hard because there was no spigot or other source of water in the lot, which meant they had to lug buckets of water from the buildings around the lot. 7. When Sam said, "The garden was a copy of the neighborhood," he meant that the little world represented by the garden was still not a harmonious society. Instead of getting to know each other better, the gardeners worked exclusively alongside people of their own ethnic background or race. They even began putting up fences around their own enclaves. That was also true of Cleveland Heights.

### Virgil, Sae Young

Vocabulary: 1. pronounced 2. plantation 3. extended 4. coincidence 5. humid

Questions: 1. Virgil's father lied to Miss Fleck about the ownership of the plots of land on which he planted lettuce, claiming that much of the lettuce was planted for relatives who could not do the work themselves: he needed to justify his disproportionate use of the community land. 2. Miss Fleck



responded to the lie she was told with polite disbelief; she questioned Virgil's father in a pointed way, and called the desire of all his relatives to plant lettuce a "coincidence," but meant just the opposite. 3. The lettuce crop failed because it was planted in the wrong season. In order to have succeeded with the lettuce crop, Virgil's father would have had to plant in the spring or fall. He should also have done some research into the best way to grow lettuce. 4. Sae Young became afraid of people because she had been robbed and beaten in her dry cleaning store. Becoming one of the gardeners and speaking with others helped her get over her fears and made her a part of a community again. 5. The use of the funnels for gathering water was the best idea because it was simple, required little physical labor, and cost almost nothing.

**Curtis, Nora**

Vocabulary: 1. f 2. d 3. c 4. a 5. e 6. b; 1. refuge 2. aroma 3. customary 5. dignified 5. solitary  
6. haphazard

Questions: 1. Curtis planted tomatoes in the lot because he wanted to prove to his former girlfriend, Lateesha, that he cared for her and wanted to take on adult responsibilities; her window faced the lot, so she could watch the progress of his gardening work. 2. Curtis helped Royce by buying him a sleeping bag and food and, in return, Royce guarded Curtis's tomato plants. 3. Nora called Mr. Myles's work in the garden "a mind altering drug" because the work excited and energized him, giving him a fresh interest in life. 4. Mr. Myles and Nora became part of the Gibb Street gardening community when a rain shower forced them to shelter under a nearby awning where the other gardeners gathered. They all became acquainted and soon Mr. Myles and Nora were an accepted part of the community of gardeners.

**Maricela, Amir, Florence**

Vocabulary: 1. a 2. c 3. b 4. d 5. c

Questions: 1. Maricela felt like an outcast because as a pregnant, Mexican teenager she embodied three stigmatized qualities. 2. Maricela was coerced into becoming involved in the community garden when the director of her program for pregnant teenagers obtained a spot in the garden so that the girls could have practice taking care of living things. 3. Maricela "tuned out" advice about giving birth and raising children because she did not accept her pregnancy and did not look forward to having the baby; she seemed to be pretending this natural process was not happening to her. 4. It became clear that Maricela was beginning to appreciate the garden when she was willing to listen to Leona describe her body as being part of the cycle of nature. She seemed ready to accept this analogy as she now saw the garden as a microcosm of the natural world. 5. Amir was critical of America because he believed that people here, unlike in his village in India, avoided making new friendships. People did not seem neighborly, preferring to remain independent of others. 6. The cooperative spirit and friendliness that the garden developed among neighbors who were once noncommunicative changed Amir's perception of America. 7. Amir retold the story of the Polish woman who had been in a concentration camp in order to show that he had learned to see people as individuals, rather than stereotypes. 8. By "seedfolks," Florence meant the first people to settle into an area and make it their home. You could explain the word as "the first settlers" or as "the first people to plant seeds in a place." 9. Spring was special to Florence because she was from the country and was used to seeing things grow; the season represented rebirth and endless possibilities as earth renewed itself in the natural cycle.

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Little Runner of the Longhouse..\$1318	Snowshoe Thompson.....\$2273	Shortstop From Tokyo.....\$0938	The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane.....\$3799
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