Introduce of book
"SeedFolks" by Paul Fleischman
Lesson plan activity written by:
Susan Ferrell

Introduction Activity: Each student will read one chapter of the book “SeedFolks” silently and will answer questions about the chapter they read. Students should be prepared to discuss/share the chapter they read.

Grade Levels: 4th to 8th grades

Materials Needed:
One copy of “SeedFolks” for each student in class
Post-it notes to mark each chapter
½ Sheet copies of 5 questions about chapter read in “SeedFolks”, 1 per student

Time Needed: about 30 minutes, depending on discussion

Group Read by individual Chapters
Mark each book with a Post-It note to indicate the chapter the student will be reading. “SeedFolks” has 13 chapters so most classes will have more than enough students to each have a different chapter and some chapters repeated.
Students will be given the ½ sheet of paper containing the 5 general questions that can be answered from any chapter. Allow about 10 minutes of silent reading time for students to complete their assigned chapter. Allow for discussion time for students to share out the entire book.

Extension of this activity: Make one copy of the SeedFolks Character Chart to pass around the room. Students are to complete the row that corresponds to their main character of the chapter they read. Display the completed chart with a document camera. There are 2 character names listed on the chart that are not chapter titles.

The questions on page 2 are to be copied on a sheet of paper, cut in ½, and given to each student to answer about the chapter they read.
Questions about the chapter read from “SeedFolks”

Name____________________
Date_____________ Period____

1. Name of chapter you just completed reading:______________________________

2. Please list the name of the plant or seed mentioned in this chapter. _____________
   If no seed or plant mentioned please write No in the blank above.

3. Besides the name of the person in the title of the chapter, please list the names of any
   other characters mentioned in the chapter read.______________________________

4. Please look through the chapter and list the names of a country or city mentioned in the
   chapter _______________________.

5. If a reason is given for the seeds or plants planted by the main character, list the reason
   or reasons in the blank:_________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________
Make a Paper Cube

- Cut along the outside edge.
- Fold inward along the inside lines.
- Glue the flaps to hold the cube.
After reading one chapter from the book "SeedFolks", you will create a seed packet about the main character.

Grade Level: 4 - 8

Subjects: Art, Reading, Language Arts

Materials: "SeedFolks" book, one per student

- Seed packet template, 2 templates per page
- 1 Character Drawings sheet with names, the one sheet can be passed around and shared by all students.

- Colored pencils
- Markers
- Crayons
- Pencil
- Double stick tape
- Glue sticks
- Scissors

From the seed packet template, cut out along the solid lines, cutting out 2 blank, flat seed packets. One blank seed packet will be used for this activity; one blank packet will be used for another activity.

Fold along dotted lines and assemble your seed packet. Use a glue stick or double stick tape to assemble your seed packet.

Find the name and picture of the main character from the chapter you read on the Character Drawings Sheet and carefully cut it out. Pass this sheet along to the next student so he or she can cut out the character they read about.

Use glue or tape to attach the picture with name to the front of the seed packet.

Using colored pencils, markers, or crayons, decorate this seed packet with a drawing of the fruit or vegetable the main character grew in the story.
On the back of the packet include the following information:
1. Country or city the main character lived or was born in before moving to the apartment building in Cleveland, Ohio.
2. Time of year these seeds were planted if mentioned in the chapter
3. Who or why the seeds were planted if a reason was given
4. What the main character planned to do with the fruits or vegetables once harvested if mentioned.
5. Be sure to include your name, date, and class period.

Extension of this activity:

Use the paper cube template to create a 3-D cube to present the same information. There are a total of 6 sides to decorate/write information on. Assemble cube and create mobiles of all cubes.
Seedfolks Character Chart

In the chart below, put a plus sign (+) or a minus sign (-) in the box whose descriptor best fits each character.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>immigrant</th>
<th>cares about others</th>
<th>knows neighbors</th>
<th>good gardener</th>
<th>enjoys life</th>
<th>young</th>
<th>old</th>
<th>educated</th>
<th>valuable to garden</th>
<th>lonely</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kim</td>
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In *Seedfolks*, Newbery Medalist Paul Fleischman creates an urban garden that brings a new sense of hope and community to a bleak Cleveland neighborhood. *Seedfolks* consists of a series of first-person vignettes, each told by a different character. As perspectives, dispositions, and backgrounds shift with the narratives, the reader comes to understand the personal reasons that bring these thirteen very different individuals one by one to a vacant lot to plant and nourish seeds. Despite prejudices, hesitancies, and language differences, the isolated neighbors begin to find ways of overlooking these barriers to develop new relationships with one another. Before long the multiethnic seedfolks have developed a sense of pride and fellowship. The distinct voices of each character show the reader the vast differences and similarities that can exist simultaneously among diverse people, and how these differences can actually help those people form a community as vibrant and rich as the garden they have created.
Before Reading
Although the characters in *Seedfolks* live in the same neighborhood, most of them never bothered to introduce themselves until they started seeing one another at the garden. Have students think about their own neighborhoods. What does it mean to be neighbors? What are their relationships with their neighbors? What are some things that could potentially turn a neighborhood into a community? Do they think that their neighbors would welcome an opportunity to get to know one another better?

Challenging Issues
*Seedfolks* deals with certain issues that might be difficult for some students to discuss in the classroom, such as teen pregnancy and drugs. Keeping the focus on the novel’s characters and their social context rather than on students’ personal experiences can make it easier for the class to discuss these issues.

When discussing Maricela, the character introduced on page 52, students should recognize that she is angry with herself for the situation into which she has gotten herself. On page 5, be sure students recognize that “Negro” was the name used for African Americans during the time period (the Depression) being discussed.

Compare and Contrast
Each character in the book has a distinct background and reasons for coming to the garden. Select five characters from the book. For each character consider the following: What is the character’s ethnicity? What plant does the character choose to grow, and why? What brings this character to the garden? What does the character gain from participating in the planting of the garden? Address these questions in the form of a chart, with the characters’ names down the side and the questions across the top. Fill in the chart with the class as you read.

Identify Problems and Solutions
In *Seedfolks*, the gardeners encounter the problem of getting water to their plants. How does the group work together to solve this problem? What other problems come up throughout the book, and how are they dealt with? What problems do you think the garden might face in the future?

Identify Steps in a Process
In the course of the book, the small garden turns isolated neighbors into a community. As students read, have them identify the steps that lead to this unexpected outcome. Make a poster-sized diagram of this process, and update it as you read.

Recognize Point of View
Ask students to think about how the author gave each of his characters a distinct voice. Describe some of the ways Fleischman distinguishes the characters by how they tell their stories. How does the way in which characters present their stories help convey their personalities to the reader? Recall an example of when the same event is described by two different characters. How do their depictions differ? What factors may have contributed to the characters’ different perspectives?
**Questions for Group Discussion**

1. How does the garden itself become a metaphor for what happens among its members?

2. Kim starts the garden without even realizing it. How does she do this? What are her reasons for planting lima bean seeds?

3. What does Ana assume about Kim when she sees her burying her seeds? How does she feel when she realizes her error?

4. On page 13 Gonzalo says, “The older you are, the younger you get when you move to the United States.” What does he mean by this?

5. How does Leona affect the course of the narrative? How does she use the garbage from the lot to her advantage?

6. List some of the problems that the gardeners encounter. How do they help one another deal with these obstacles?

7. Describe Sae Young’s traumatic experiences in America. How does the garden help her overcome them?

8. Curtis tries to change his ways as he woos Lateesha with the tomatoes. What is he trying to show Lateesha about his values and principles?

9. In the course of the novel, a homeless young man named Royce comes to live in the garden. Describe how the gardeners’ attitudes toward Royce change. How do they help Royce, and how does he help them in return?

10. Why does Penny think working in the garden will be good for Maricela? How does it get Maricela to think differently?

11. What does Sam observe about how the garden is set up? How does he feel about this?

12. Sam likes to spend his time “sewing up the rips in the neighborhood.” What are some of the ways he does this in the garden? What are some of the things he does that many other people never bothered doing? Why do you think this approach helps him get through to people?

13. On page 59 Amir says that “the garden’s greatest benefit, I feel, was not relief to the eyes, but to make the eyes see our neighbors.” What does he mean? Give some examples.

14. What does Florence mean by the word “seedfolks”? Why do you think the author chose this as the title for the book?

15. What are some of the stereotypes Amir has about Polish people, and how does his attitude change when he meets one? What does this demonstrate about passing judgment?

16. What are some of the ways in which the characters work around language barriers to communicate?
**Language Arts**

Have students take the role of a “seedfolk” and write their own vignette to add to this collection. Just as Fleischman gives each of his characters a distinct background, voice, and set of problems, have students develop such factors in their own stories. Make copies of the class’s stories, collate them, and distribute them to the class as a book entitled [Your name]’s *Seedfolks*.

**Social Studies**

The characters in *Seedfolks* come from a variety of different countries. Have students locate these places on the map. Have small groups of students choose a character and research the history and economy of that character’s country of origin. Then have each group prepare a report on that country, focusing on the factors that may have led people to emigrate to the United States.

*Seedfolks* takes place in a poor section of Cleveland, Ohio, with a transient population. As Ana says on page 5, “You stay until you’ve got enough money to leave.” Creating the garden, however, not only brings beauty to the neighborhood, but also a sense of pride and community. Using research and their imaginations, have students think about other ways to boost morale and pride in the neighborhoods. Have them share these ideas in posters with the class.

As a class, adopt an area in your neighborhood to fix up. If it’s not possible to plant a garden in the space, refer to the morale-boosting activities that students come up with and make your adopted space something of which the neighborhood can be proud.

**Science**

Maricela is instructed to grow plants in the garden to learn how it feels to take care of something living. Have students grow their own lima bean seeds. Have them keep a journal of the plants’ progress and their responsibilities in taking care of them. Lima beans develop quickly, so have students chart the beans’ growth each day. Monitor progress and growth, and compare results. If a plant doesn’t make it, review the journals and try to figure out why. At the end of the project, have the students summarize what they did and how they dealt with unexpected complications. Periodically, have students discuss their progress. This is a good opportunity for classmates to help one another solve problems or complications that arise with plant growth.

**Art**

Have each student design a jacket for the book. Before they start, brainstorm with the class things to consider in designing a book jacket, such as making it eye-catching, finding creative ways to convey what the book is about, and deciding the people to whom this jacket should appeal. Hang the book jackets around the room.

**Drama**

Choose a volunteer to select a character from the book and impersonate that character. Have the student come to the front of the room, in character, and answer questions posed by other classmates. Repeat for other characters with other volunteers. If you have more volunteers than characters, consider some of the characters who do not narrate, such as Lateesha, Royce, or Virgil’s father. Prepare students for the activity the day before so that they will have some time to think of questions for the various characters.
Where did the idea for *Seedfolks* come from?
In a place where many of my books have started: the newspaper. I spotted an article about a local psychologist who used gardening as a therapy for her clients. I’d been looking for a setting that would bring a varied cast together. Suddenly, I realized I’d found one—not the garden in the article, but a community garden.

Are parts of the book autobiographical?
My parents were true plant people, gradually replacing the front lawn with fruit trees and even a cornfield. My mother had also volunteered in a garden at a veterans’ hospital, teaching shell-shocked soldiers how to raise plants. There’s a little of her in Nora, the nurse, and a little of me in Sam. Like him, I like to bring people together. I’m also in Kim, since my mother had recently died and I was wishing she could read the books I was writing—especially this one.

Questions for Paul Fleischman

How did you choose the title?
*Seedfolks* is an old word for ancestors. I’d come across it somewhere in my reading and had planned to use it for a very different book—interviews with first-generation immigrants who’d planted their families in the United States. It’s a subject close to me, having two sons adopted from Mexico.

What research did you have to do?
I’ve never lived in Cleveland and have never had a plot in a community garden. So I visited gardens, took notes, asked questions. I read books on Cleveland, recent immigrants, and gardening. I remembered the melting pot neighborhoods I’d lived in Berkeley, Omaha, and Albuquerque. Writers learn how to find out what they need to know.

Why did you tell the story from many characters’ points of view?
I seem to have been born with a multitrack mind and wanted to write music rather than books when I was young. Before *Seedfolks* I’d written two collections of poems for two speakers. Then came *Bull Run*, an account of the Civil War battle from sixteen characters’ points of view, my attempt at something symphonic. That work was the first use of the form in novels for children as far as I know. It’s now commonplace because of its many advantages: Writers get to write in different voices, can show events from different perspectives, and get to present an unpredictable, kaleidoscopic surface to their readers.
Visit the following websites for information on how to start your own community garden, and more!

Don’t forget to visit Paul Fleischman’s website at www.paulfleischman.net
American Community Gardening Association www.communitygarden.org
National Gardening Association www.garden.org/home

More titles by Paul Fleischman

The Borning Room
Pb 0-06-447099-7 • $4.99 ($7.99)
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- Best Books for Young Adults (ALA)
- Horn Book Fanfare Honor List
- School Library Journal Best Books
- ALA Booklist Editors’ Choice
- Teacher’s Choices (IRA/CBC)
- Notable Children’s Trade Books in the Field of Social Studies (NCSS/CBC)
- Notable Children’s Books in the Language Arts (NCTE)
- “One Hundred Titles for Reading and Sharing”
- Bulletin Blue Ribbon Books
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- Golden Kite Award Honor Book

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Pb 0-06-440588-5 • $4.99 ($6.50)
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- Best Books for Young Adults (ALA)
- Best of the Best Books for Young Adults (ALA)
- Horn Book Fanfare Honor List
- School Library Journal Best Books
- ALA Booklist Editors’ Choices
- Teachers’ Choices (IRA/CBC)
- Notable Children’s Books in the Language Arts (NCTE)
- Scott O’Dell Award for Historical Fiction for Children
- Fansfare Honor List
- Children’s Books of the Year (Library of Congress)
- New York Public Library Books for the Teen Age
- Golden Kite Award Honor Book

Joyful Noise: Poems for Two Voices
Illustrated by Eric Beddows
Tr 0-06-021852-5 • $15.99 ($23.99)
Lb 0-06-021853-3 • $16.89 ($25.89)
Pb 0-06-446093-2 • $5.99 ($8.50)
- Newbery Medal
- Notable Children’s Books (ALA)
- Best Books for Young Adults (ALA)
- Boston Globe-Horn Book Award
- Honor Book for Fiction/Poetry
- Horn Book Fanfare Honor List
- Notable Children’s Books in the Language Arts (NCTE)
- Children’s Books of the Year (Library of Congress)
- New York Public Library’s Books for the Teen Age
- New York Public Library’s “One Hundred Titles for Reading and Sharing”

Saturnalia
Illustrated by Joel Spector
Pb 0-06-447089-X • $5.99 ($7.99)
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- Horn Book Fanfare Honor List
- School Library Journal Best Book
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- New York Public Library Books for the Teen Age
- New York Public Library’s “One Hundred Titles for Reading and Sharing”
- Bulletin Blue Ribbon
- Joyful Noise and I Am Phoenix
- Unabridged
CD 0-06-052639-X • $12.00 ($19.00)

I Am Phoenix: Poems for Two Voices
Illustrated by Ken Nutt
Pb 0-06-446092-4 • $5.99 ($7.99)
- Notable Children’s Books in the Language Arts (NCTE)
- Children’s Books of the Year (Library of Congress)
- New York Public Library Books for the Teen Age

Time Train
Illustrated by Claire Ewart
Pb 0-06-443351-X • $6.99 ($9.99)
- School Library Journal Best Book

For exclusive information on your favorite authors and artists, visit www.authortracker.com.
Prices and availability subject to change without notice. To order, contact your local bookstore or distributor.
Activity: Students will write about themselves as if they are a SeedFolks character and adding Chapter 14 to the book.

Grades: 4th to 8th grades

Materials: one copy of the book “SeedFolks” for each student
   2nd template of seed packet cut out from previous lesson
   1 sheet of construction paper for each student
   4 sheets of white cardstock paper
   Stapler
   Scissors
   Colored pencils
   Markers
   Crayons
   Pen or pencil
   Glue stick
   Double stick tape

1. Students will construct a booklet based on themselves becoming a character in the story “SeedFolks”.
2. Students will cut out the 2nd seed packet template and decorate the front only with the name of seeds and a drawing of the plant they would plant if they were a character in the book “SeedFolks”. They will color the fruit or vegetable they would plant and write one reason they would plant those seeds. When putting the seed packet together, do not tape the top flap, leave packet open.
3. Students will cut a 2” x 2” square of paper from scraps to draw a self portrait like the pictures at the beginning of each chapter in SeedFolks. This picture will go inside the seed packet.
4. Students will then fold the construction paper in ½ and attach the seed packet to the front of the booklet. They may decorate the cover with pictures of the seeds growing, plants and harvested fruits or vegetables.
5. Fold in ½ the 4 sheets of white cardstock and staple in the center of the folding construction paper. These become the pages of the book or chapter 14.
6. The following information should appear on the pages to complete Chapter 14:
   Country or city you lived in before moving to Cleveland, Ohio
   Why you moved to Cleveland, Ohio.
   The seeds you are planting in the garden.
   What is the reason you choose those seeds to plant?
   What you plan to do with the fruits or vegetables once they are picked.
   If you live with a family, names of the members of your family.
   Will you grow the same seeds next year or will you try something different. If you plan to try something different what type of seeds will you plant next year?
   Did you enjoy working in the garden? Explain your answer, why or why not?

   Each of your answers should be written in complete sentences. You may need to use more than one sentence to fully answer your question.
   Since there are 8 questions and 8 pages, you may answer each question on a different page of your book.
Resources from Presentation titled:
“Read About a Garden Before You Plant”
By Susan Ferrell, Lead Teacher
Dowdell Middle Magnet School
1208 Wishing Well Way
Tampa, FL 33619
813-744-8322 ext. 238
Susan.ferrell@sdhc.k12.fl.us

Seedfolks by Paul Fleischman, ISBN 0-06-447207-8

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Hugey Aquafarm
229 Parker Rd.
Andrews, SC 29510
843-387-5778
Aquapoinic70@yahoo.com
When contacting Travis please reference that you received information from Susan Ferrell, teacher in Tampa, FL.

Seedfolks Lesson Plan
http://www2.scholastic.com/browse/lessonplan.jsp?id=983&print=2

Guide to reading the book “Seedfolks”

http://www.gardensandcrafts.com/seedpackets.html
Blank seed packet template
3-D Paper Cube from [www.havefunteaching.com](http://www.havefunteaching.com)

**Gazpacho - Cold Soup (Italian)**
*Recipe by Susan Ferrell*

1 cup finely chopped peeled tomatoes, Roma work well

½ c finely chopped green sweet peppers

½ c finely chopped cucumber

½ c finely chopped celery

¼ c minced onion

2 t chopped parsley

1 t chives

1 small pressed garlic

2 T Wine Vinegar

2 T olive oil

1 t salt

½ t pepper

½ t Worcestershire sauce

2 cups Clamato Juice

Combine all ingredients in bowl & blend well. Cover tightly and place in refrigerator for at least 4 hours. Serve chilled with croutons.