



Seedfolks

by Paul Fleischman

Teacher's Guide

Written By Lori Lindemann



CLASSROOM FAVORITES

A Perma-Bound Production

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Synopsis

Kim

Kim, a young Vietnamese girl, was born 8 months after her father died. Early one Sunday morning in April, on the anniversary of his death, she stands before the family altar and wonders if he can see her. He had been a farmer in Vietnam, and she feels if she plants something and makes it grow, he will surely see her. She takes lima beans, finds a hidden spot in a vacant lot, and plants them.

Ana

An elderly white woman who has lived in her apartment since 1919 and has seen different ethnic groups move in and out of the neighborhood is watching from her window one morning. Ana sees a young girl bury something in the vacant lot and assumes it is drugs or money. After watching the activity for a few days, she goes down to the lot and digs in the wet spot with a butter knife. When she realizes what she's done, she is very upset with herself.

Wendell

An elderly white man who is a janitor at a local school is the one Ana first tells about the bean plants. Ana calls and tells him they need water. He resents being told what to do, but he waters the plants, building up a circle of dirt around one to hold the water. While he is there, Kim comes with a watering jug. They startle each other, and he leaves without either of them speaking. He realizes there are many things he can't change but some that he can. He moves some garbage in the vacant lot and makes a spot to plant.

Gonzalo (Garcia)

Gonzalo, a young immigrant from Guatemala feels the more English you know the older you are. He has learned English in two years after coming to Cleveland; his father had worked with Mexicans and Salvadorans and hadn't learned much English. Gonzalo had to help his father with everyday communication—Gonzalo got older, his father got younger. His younger brothers, mother, and his mother's uncle, Tío Juan, move to Cleveland too. Tío Juan has always been a farmer; one day he wanders off and finds Wendell gardening in the vacant lot. Now, instead of looking lost and confused, his eyes shine. His daughter buys him a trowel and four packets of seeds, and he plants them. He changes from a baby back into a man; he becomes focused, rather than confused.

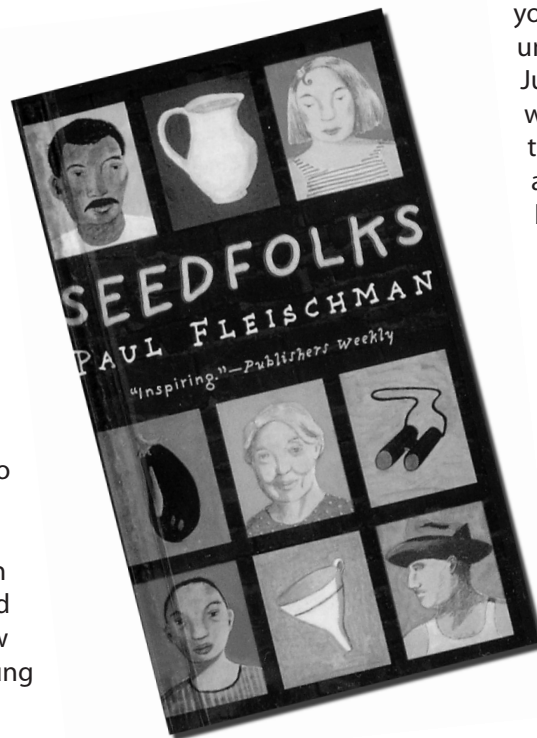
Leona

A black woman who has grown up with her grandmother in Atlanta has fond memories of her grandmother's drinking goldenrod tea with nutmeg. Leona sees three people gardening and decides to plant a patch of goldenrod. She knows there is too much trash in the lot. Monday morning she starts calling government officials to get it picked up. She spends the day being put on hold and transferred from one official to another,

and the same thing happens on Tuesday. On Wednesday, she goes downtown to the Public Health Department where she is told to wait again. She opens a bag of the stinky trash letting its stink permeate the room and finally gets to talk to someone.

Sam

A Jewish man sees men clearing the lot. They tell him the land is for anyone who wants to plant a garden. Sam had spent 36 years trying to patch-up the whole world. Now he focuses only on his corner of Cleveland—trying to get people talking to him and to each other. He can't dig the soil, so he hires a Puerto Rican teenager to help him. The teenager wanted to plant something too; his first thought is *marijuana*, but Sam talks him into pumpkins. Their work is impeded by the lack of water.



Sam notices groups segregating themselves—blacks on one side, whites on another, Central Americans and Asians toward the back. One man even has a Philippine flag flying. The homeless man who slept in the lot is angered at the change; he starts ripping out people's plants, but the police come. People worry about strangers taking their produce. Fences, padlocks, Keep Out signs, and barbed-wire appears. The people are becoming divided, and the lot is changing from Paradise back to Cleveland.

Virgil

Virgil, an immigrant from Haiti whose father had been a bus driver in Haiti but drives a taxi in Cleveland, is embarrassed to be seen working in the garden. His father wants to get rich by raising baby lettuce for restaurants. Virgil is also embarrassed by the space his father clears and that he's lied about it being for relatives. They know nothing about farming, and the lettuce doesn't receive proper care. When it wilts and is eaten by bugs, Virgil asks for help from the picture of a girl in a locket he found while clearing land.

Sae Young

Sae Young is from Korea and had run a dry cleaning shop with her husband but is now a widow. She was beaten and robbed at the shop, and now she is afraid of people. She walks by the garden and wants to connect with people again. The next day, she digs a small garden to grow hot peppers. Sam is the first person to talk to her. He organizes a contest to solve the water problem. The winning idea is to put garbage cans at the rain spouts on the walls to collect water. When people have a hard time pouring water into narrow containers, Sae Young buys three funnels and others use them. She feels she's become part of the garden.

Curtis

Curtis, a young black man, has lost his girlfriend, Lateesha, for not brushing off other girls. He tries to win her back by planting the tomatoes she loves in view of her apartment. He takes good care of them, but is taunted for his efforts. When someone steals two tomatoes, Curtis hires Royce, a young, homeless, black boy whose father has thrown him out. Curtis provides Royce with a place to sleep in the garden, buys him a sleeping bag, and gives him food money in exchange for Royce's guarding the tomatoes at night. Curtis puts up a sign that says Lateesha's Tomatoes. When he looks up at her apartment, he thinks he sees her watching him.

Nora

Nora, a British nurse who tends an elderly black man, Mr. Myles, first sees the garden when she pushes his wheelchair on Gibb Street. Since his second stroke, Mr. Myles has lacked interest in the world until he sees and smells the garden. The first day, they watch the others. Later, Nora buys a barrel and fills it with dirt. Mr. Myles chooses flowers to plant. They become enthralled with their gardening. One day there is a downpour and everyone gathers under a store's overhang. They all meet and overcome language barriers by using pantomime.

Maricela

A pregnant 16-year old Mexican girl, Maricela, is depressed and hopes she miscarries. She has dropped out of school, has no social life, and is part of a program for pregnant teens. Penny, the program leader, gets them a spot in the garden to get them used to taking care of something. They plant radishes, then squash, then Swiss chard. One day she sees Miss Fleck, her third-grade teacher, and Miss Fleck recognizes her. Maricela hates gardening, and she hates being there. People give the girls healthy food to eat, advice on gardening, and advice on parenting. One day, Leona gives her golden-rod. A storm blows in, and there's a power outage. Leona comments that the whole city goes out but that the garden and nature continue. She tells Maricela that she is a part of the whole cycle of nature, momentarily, Maricela stops wishing her baby would die.

Amir

An immigrant from India, Amir manages a fabric store and feels Americans try to avoid contact with others. He grows eggplants, onions, carrots, and cauliflower. People Amir had seen but never spoken to begin to talk with him about his eggplants. The garden brings out their natural friendliness. They work together and bond as a community. He talks to a Polish woman who can't "cull" unhealthy plants because it reminds her of the concentration camp she'd been in. He realizes there is more to Poles than tough steel workers and women who cook cabbage.

He describes how Royce, once feared, has become a favorite among the gardeners. The mothers start trying to feed him. In return, he works people's gardens when they can't, although he pretends he hasn't done it. Royce is trusted and liked; he is no longer just a black teenager—he is now Royce. One day Royce and a Mexican man build a brick barbecue and roast a pig. People bring food, drinks, musical instruments, and it becomes a party. People know each other as individuals, not just someone of another race.

Florence

Florence, a black woman whose great-grandparents had been freed slaves and had gone all the way to the Gunnison River to start a family, compares the gardeners to her great-grandparents. Her great-grandparents were called seedfolks because they were the first of the family there. The first gardeners on Gibb Street reminded her of seedfolks. She's unable to participate so she is one of the watchers. There are many watchers, and they are proud and protective of the garden. Florence is glad to see people making something for themselves instead of just waiting for a welfare check. Fall comes, frost hits, the boy sells the pumpkins. It's a hard for Florence to see the garden over the long, cold winter, and she is concerned when, in April, the garden is still empty. Then one day, someone is digging—a little Oriental girl with lima beans. Florence watches and others watch too.

Author Sketch

Paul Fleischman was born September 5, 1952, in Monterey, California. He is the son of Albert Sidney (Sid) and Beth Taylor Fleischman. (Sid Fleischman is also an award-winning children's author.) As a child, he would gather with the rest of the family to hear the chapters of his father's books as they were completed. He learned early in life the importance of arranging words into pleasing, musical patterns. He sees the story line as the most important part of his writing, but his intense attention to sound runs through all his works. "If I can please my listeners' ears while telling my tale, such that the listener who knew no English would enjoy it read aloud purely for its music, so much the better," he writes in *Horn Book*.



Fleischman didn't plan to be a writer. He attended University of California, Berkeley, 1970-72, and graduated from University of New Mexico, B.A., 1977. Just before he graduated he wrote his first story, *The Birthday Tree*, because he felt he should do something. He showed it to his father after graduation, and the elder Fleischman was very impressed. He realized his son had been learning the craft of writing since childhood.

Paul Fleischman married Becky Mojica on December 15, 1978, and they have two children, Seth and Dana. They live in Pacific Grove, California, where he researches or writes approximately eight hours a day. In his free time, he plays bocce, the Italian outdoor bowling game, and dabbles in music. He has recently begun writing music.

Critic's Corner

In 1997, Paul Fleischman added yet another title to his list of critically acclaimed books, *Seedfolks*. Thirteen different voices—Hispanic, Haitian, Korean, Jamaican, Vietnamese, tough, haunted, and hopeful—tell an amazing story about a garden that transformed a disconnected Cleveland neighborhood into a community. Paul Fleischman weaves characters as diverse as the plants they grow into a rich, multi-layered exploration of how a community is born and nurtured in an urban environment.

Booklist said, "Each voice is distinct. Each character springs to life, complete with attitudes, prejudices, and opinions, and as the viewpoints shift, Fleischman shows how the different members of a multi-ethnic urban neighborhood overcome the barriers of language and background to enrich one another and forge new connections. The characters' vitality and the sharply delineated details of the neighborhood make this not merely an exercise in craftsmanship or morality but an engaging, entertaining novel as well."

According to *Kirkus Reviews*, "Readers won't gain any great appreciation for the art and science of gardening from this, but they may come away understanding that people can work side by side despite vastly different motives, attitudes, skills, and cultural backgrounds. It's a worthy idea."

An editorial review for Amazon.com called *Seedfolks*, "a slim novel that bursts with hope.... A gift for hearts of all ages, this gentle timeless story will delight anyone in need of a sprig of inspiration."

Fleischman has won many awards for his books, including: Newbery Medal Award for *Joyful Noise: Poems for Two Voices*; Newbery honor book award for *Graven Images: Three Stories*; Golden Kite honor book awards for *The Half-a-Moon Inn*, *Path of the Pale Horse*, and *The Boring Room*; Parents' Choice Awards for *Path of the Pale Horse*, as well as many others.

Other Works by Paul Fleischman

Juvenile Books

The Animal Hedge (picture book) (1983)
Big Talk: Poems for Four Voices (2000)
The Birthday Tree (1979)
The Burning Room (1991)
Breakout (2003)
Bull Run (1993)
Cannibal in the Mirror (2000)
Coming-and-Going Men: Four Tales (1985)
Copier Creations: Using Copy Machines to Make Decals, Silhouettes, Flip Books, Films and Much More! (1993)
Dateline: Troy (1996, rev. 2006)
A Fate Totally Worse than Death (1995)
Finzel the Farsighted (1983)
Ghosts' Grace: A Poem for Four Voices (1996)
Graven Images: Three Stories (1982, rev. 206)
The Half-a-Moon Inn (1980)
I Am Phoenix: Poems for Two Voices (1985)
Joyful Noise: Poems for Two Voices (1988)
Lost! A Story in String (2000)
Mind's Eye (1999)
Path of the Pale Horse (1983)
Phoebe Danger, Detective, in the Case of the Two-Minute Cough (1983)
Rear-View Mirrors (1986)
Rondo in C (1988)
Saturnalia (1990)
Seek (2001)
Sidewalk Circus (2004)
Shadow Play (picture book) (1990)
Time Train (1991)
Townsend's Warbler (nonfiction) (1992)
Westlandia (1999)
Whirligig (1998)
Zap (2005)

Bibliography

"ERIC Bibliography—Paul Fleischman,"
www.indiana.edu/~eric_rec/ieo/bibs/fleisp.html
"Paul Fleischman."
www.charlottezlotow.com/paul_fleischman.htm
"Paul Fleischman-Seedfolks."
www.harperchildrens.com/hch/author/features/fleischman.asp
Robb, Laura, "Talking With Paul Fleischman," *Booklinks*, March 1997.
Sime, Richard, and Laura Mongello, eds. *Elements of Literature*. Austin: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 2000. pp. 705-718.

General Objectives

1. To understand first-person narration
2. To analyze the characters' personalities
3. To evaluate characters' motivations
4. To compare and contrast characters in the work
5. To discuss the importance of community
6. To recognize the barriers that keep people from forming connections with their neighbors

Specific Objectives

1. To evaluate our own preconceptions about people of different races
2. To identify the barriers that had kept these neighbors from befriending one another
3. To discuss the effect of the garden on each character
4. To analyze the changes that occurred within individual characters as they connected with one another

Literary Terms and Applications

To enhance students' appreciation and understanding of the novel, present them with these terms.

Point-of-View: The most common points of view are omniscient, third-person limited, and first person.

1. In the omniscient (all knowing) point of view, the narrator knows everything about the characters and their problems. This all-knowing narrator can tell us what all of the characters are thinking or feeling.

2. In the third-person limited point of view, the narrator focuses on the thoughts and feelings of only one character. From this point of view, we observe the action through the eyes of only one of the characters in the story.
3. In the first-person point of view, one of the characters, using the personal pronoun I, tells the story. We become familiar with the narrator, but we can know only what this person knows and observe only what this person observes. All of our information about the story comes from this narrator.

Seedfolks is told in first-person point of view, but each chapter has a different narrator. In this book, the reader is actually told, in first-person by each individual narrator, what the character did, thought, and felt. Although each chapter is told from one character's point of view, the entire book gives the reader a well rounded knowledge of each character.

Motivation: the reasons a character behaves in a certain way. Among the many reasons for a person's behavior are feelings, experiences, and commands by others. It is sometimes difficult to pinpoint a character's motivation because it is often inferred instead of stated. However, since each chapter in *Seedfolks* is told by the main character of that chapter, the thoughts and motivations are explicitly revealed to the reader.

Theme: the general idea or insight about life that a work of literature reveals. A theme is not the same as a subject. The subject of a work can usually be expressed in a word or two: gardening, community, racial relations. A theme is an idea or message that the writer wishes to convey about that subject. For example, one theme of *Seedfolks* is that people can work side by side despite vastly different motives, attitudes, skills and cultural backgrounds to forge new connections and create a sense of community. A work's themes (there may be more than one) are usually not stated directly. Usually the reader has to think about all the elements of the work and infer, or make an educated guess, about what the themes are.

Cross-Curricular Sources

Fiction

Clyde Robert Bulla, *The Chalk Box Kid*
 Frances Hodgson Burnett, *The Secret Garden*
 Shea Darian, *Grandpa's Garden*

Felice Holman, *Secret City, U.S.A.*
 Anne Mazer, *Moose Street*
 Nicholasa Mohr, *Felita*
 Lynne Rae Perkins, *Home Lovely*
 An Na, *A Step from Heaven*
 Luis J. Rodriguez, *America is her Name*
 Sarah Stewart, *The Gardener*
 Jean Thesman, *Nothing Grows Here*
 Jeanne Titherington, *Pumpkin Pie*

Non-Fiction

Rosiland Creasy, *Blue Potatoes, Orange Tomatoes*
 David Hassler, *A Place to Grow: Voices and Images of Urban Gardens*
 H. Patricia Hynes, *A Patch of Eden: America's Inner-City Gardeners*
 Jack Kramer, *Plant Hobbies: A Beginner's Book of Gardening Projects, Principles, and Pleasures*
 Reader's Digest, *1001 Hints and Tips for Your Garden*

Internet

"American Community Gardening Association,"
www.communitygarden.org
 "Chatting with Paul Fleischman and Kevin Hawkes
 about a Civilization As You've Never Seen It!"
www.candlewick.com/book_files/0763600067.art.1.pdf
 "Community Gardening,"
www.hort.vt.edu/human/CommunityGard.html

Themes and Motifs

A study of the central issues and situations in Paul Fleischman's *Seedfolks* should include these aspects:

Themes

- prejudice
- separation
- determination
- respect
- fear
- community
- support
- understanding
- gardening
- common goals
- human relationships
- connection to others

Motifs

- how separation effects communities
- how prejudice determines behavior
- how powerful is the effect of hope
- how fear and distrust cause segregation of groups

- how people work toward a common goal
- how human relationships can be forged
- how connecting to others gives a sense of community
- how determined people can overcome obstacles

Meaning Study

1. This has always been a working-class neighborhood. It's like a cheap hotel—you stay until you've got enough money to leave. (p. 6)
(Ana describes the neighborhood—people live there because they can't afford to live anywhere else. She describes a multi-cultural neighborhood that's seen a lot of change over the years.)
2. The older you are, the younger you get when you move to the United States....It's Garcia's Equation. (p. 17)
(Gonzalo believed knowing English was the key to being treated like an intelligent, competent adult. No matter how important someone had been before coming to the United States, if they didn't speak English they were treated like a child in his neighborhood.)
3. With a few exceptions, the blacks on one side, the whites on another, the Central Americans and Asians toward the back. The garden was a copy of the neighborhood....Each group kept to itself, spoke its own language, and grew its own special crops. (p. 33-34)
(Sam, who had spent his life trying to remove the barriers that separated different groups of people, was appalled to see the gardeners were segregating themselves, holding tightly to the barriers that kept them from connecting to their neighbors.)
4. I want to be with people again. Next day I go back and dig small garden. Nobody talk to me that day. But just be near people, nice people, feel good, like next to fire in winter....Even if don't talk to anyone, sound of people working almost like conversation, all around. People visit friends. I listen to voices. Feel very safe. Then man walk over and ask about peppers. I grow hot peppers, like in Korea. First time that someone talk to me. I was so glad, have trouble talking. (pp. 47-48)
(Sae Young had been the victim of a violent crime and had totally separated herself from other people. One day walking past the garden, she felt the need to re-connect with people. Her fear gave way to longing to be a part of a community. It's an inner need we have to be connected to other people.)
5. When the rain came that day, the other gardeners all ran in the same direction, as if in a fire drill.... apparently their customary refuge. The small dry space forced us together. In fifteen minutes we'd met them all and soon knew the whole band of regulars....If we happened to miss two or three days, people stopped by on our return to ask about Mr. Myles' health. We, like our seeds, were now planted in the garden. (pp. 64-65)
(Nora describes an experience of bonding between the gardeners. She feels that not only are their plants a part of the garden, but that she and Mr. Myles are a part of the garden. The gardeners have taken down some of their barriers and formed a community.)
6. The object in America is to avoid contact, to treat all as foes unless they're known to be friends. Here you have a million crabs living in a million crevices....Very many people came over to ask about them [eggplants] and talk to me. I recognized a few from the neighborhood. Not one had spoken to me before—and now how friendly they turned out to be....How happy they seemed to have found this excuse, to let their natural friendliness out. (pp. 73-75)
(Amir sums up the effect of the garden on the neighborhood. He describes a disconnected group of people making connections and forming friendships with their neighbors. It's a total about-face in how people treated one another.)
7. He was trusted and liked—and famous, after his exploit with the pitchfork. He was not a black teenage boy. He was Royce. (p. 79)
(Before the neighborhood bonded into a community, the people were in the habit of viewing others of a different race with suspicion and distrust. Once they really got to know one another, those preconceived ideas fell away, and they were able to see others as real people.)
8. My father called them our seedfolks, because they were the first of our family there. (p. 83)
(Florence gives a second meaning to the word seedfolks. The first is obvious because the gardeners all planted seeds, but her meaning has to do with them breaking new ground, taking a chance, effecting change in their neighborhood. It has to do with them being the roots of a project that has brought joy to many people.)

Comprehension Study

Answer the following questions in your own words. There is not always a right answer. Your judgment is important and you should be ready to defend your answers by referring to passages in the book.

Questions 1-5 (Literal Level)

1. What are the first things you learn about Kim?
(*On the anniversary of her father's death she left the apartment and went to the lot to plant the lima beans. She had never entered the lot before, and she was afraid. She chose a protected spot for her project. Her father had died eight months before she was born. She had no memories of him and worried that his spirit didn't even know who she was. She felt that in the vacant lot, growing beans, he would see her, he would be pleased with her hard work, and know that she was his daughter.*)
2. Explain how Ana became involved in Kim's project.
(*Ana was watching from her window when Kim planted the beans, and Ana assumed she was burying drugs or money or a gun. She saw Kim crouched down behind the refrigerator on other occasions and decided to go investigate. She dug up three beans before she realized that Kim had planted them and that she had probably damaged them. She carefully put them back in the soil. She bought binoculars so she could monitor what was going on. When Kim didn't come for four days and the beans wilted, she called Wendell to go water them.*)
3. How did Leona get the attention of the receptionist at the Public Health Department?
(*After trying to get the "right" official on the phone for two days, Leona headed downtown to talk to someone in person. The receptionist at the Public Health Department told her to have a seat and wait some more. Leona was tired of waiting, so she opened a bag of garbage from the vacant lot on the floor in the middle of the reception area. The stench got the attention of the receptionist and others.*)
4. Why did Virgil's father want to plant so much lettuce?
(*Virgil's father was a taxi driver who was always asking his customers how to make a lot of money. Someone had told him that fancy restaurants paid a lot of money for baby lettuce, so he planned to grow as much of it as he could, cut it, and rush it to restaurants. He planned to make a fortune.*)
5. How did Curtis plan to win back Lateesha?
(*Lateesha wouldn't listen to what Curtis wanted to tell her, so he decided to show her how much he still cared for her. She loved*

tomatoes, so he planted some right by the sidewalk where she could see them from the window of her apartment. He took excellent care of them. When the first two were stolen, he even hired Royce to guard them at night. He put up a sign that said, "Lateesha's Tomatoes.")

Questions 6-8 (Interpretative Level)

6. How did Sam's contest get people to work together?
(*Sam created a contest asking the children of the neighborhood to solve the problem of getting water to the garden when there were no water spigots nearby. Each was allowed to tell their idea, and Sam told how much each one would cost to implement. A little black girl had the winning idea—to let rain from spouts go into garbage cans. Everyone clapped, Sam gave the girl twenty dollars, and others gave money to buy the garbage cans. The next day there was a thunderstorm that filled the cans. Then someone bought pots to scoop the water out of the cans. It was hard to pour the water into narrow containers, so Sae Young bought a funnel to put by each can for everyone to use. The water was for everyone's use, and everyone cooperated.*)
7. Why were Virgil and his father unsuccessful in raising baby lettuce?
(*Virgil and his father knew nothing about farming. Tío Juan tried to help Virgil, but Virgil couldn't understand what he was saying. When Virgil planted the seed, he watered it incorrectly and washed the seed out, causing the lettuce to come up bunched in wavy rows. Insects ate it and the heat withered it. They were gardening for a different reason than all the other gardeners, they had less background in gardening, and they didn't take the time to learn how to raise baby lettuce.*)
8. How were the first gardeners like Florence's ancestors who settled along the Gunnison River?
(*Florence's ancestors had traveled to a new area and started a family. They were the first of that family to settle there. They were the beginnings, the origins, the seeds. The gardeners who first started the Gibb Street Garden also started something new. They were the beginnings, the origins, the seedfolks.*)

Questions 9-11 (Critical Level)

9. How did the garden transform Tío Juan from a little kid into a man?
(*Tío Juan was Gonzalo's great-uncle. In Guatemala, he was the oldest man in his pueblo, respected and honored; in Cleveland he couldn't speak English and he couldn't work so he was treated like a baby. He walked around the apartment mumbling to himself, looking confused and disoriented. When he wandered upon the garden, he tried to give people advice but he couldn't communicate. He told his daughter, and she bought him a trowel and some seed packets. He planted them, and knew exactly how to tend them. The garden made him feel competent again. It gave purpose to his life.*)

10. Explain how Royce becoming trusted and liked by the gardeners shows a significant change in their attitudes.

(When Royce first appeared in the garden, most gardeners thought of him just as a black teenager, and they were relieved when he left. (He was rather dangerous looking.) Curtis was the first to find him, and he never felt that way because Royce looked a lot like Curtis, but the other gardeners were slightly afraid of him. As Royce stayed in the garden, he would do little things for the gardeners, but he would never take credit for the things he'd done. They learned he had a stutter, he had two sisters, he liked the cats in the garden, and that he was good with his hands. Once when a robber took a woman's purse at knife-point, the gardeners rushed to her aid. Royce held the man to a wall with his pitchfork until the police arrived. Another time, Royce and a Mexican man barbecued a pig, and it turned into a party for the gardeners. What changed was not Royce. What changed was that through being around Royce, people realized what a great person he was. They judged him by his personality, not just some preconceived idea of black teenagers. The people who would have crossed the street to avoid him earlier, were now trying to give him vegetables and take care of him.)

11. Explain how the Gibb Street Garden affected the entire neighborhood, not just the gardeners.
(Obviously, the gardeners learned a lot from working together. There were others in the neighborhood who were unable to garden, but who gained the same lessons and the same experiences as the gardeners. They were the watchers—Ana, Florence, the man in the rocking chair, and others. They derived great pleasure from watching the garden take shape and seeing the changes it made in their neighborhood. The garden reminded everyone they were neighbors, not just strangers who lived in the same area. That was a positive change for the entire neighborhood. Florence even mentions landlords charging more for apartments that had a view of the garden, from which you can tell that it was an important part of the community.)

Questions 12-14 (Creative Level)

12. Draw and color a picture of the garden based on the description in the book.
13. Write a series of letters from Florence to her sister explaining the garden and how the gardeners reminded her of their ancestors who settled along the Gunnison River.
14. Gardens have been around for thousands of years. Research the origins of gardens and some of the beliefs associated with gardens. Write a short paper explaining your findings and include a timeline.

Across the Curriculum

Art, Music, and Dance

1. Draw and color a picture of the Gibb Street Garden that corresponds with the information given about it in the book.
2. The Hanging Gardens of Babylon were named as one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. Read descriptions of the Hanging Gardens of Babylon written by Greek historians and make a poster showing these gardens. Some Greek historians who wrote descriptions were Strabo, Philo of Byzantium, Berossus, and Diodorus Siculus.
3. Create a mural of the garden.

History and Social Studies

1. Research immigration from Guatemala, Haiti, Vietnam, Korea, Mexico, or India and report your findings to your class.
2. The Hanging Gardens of Babylon are considered one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. Research the origins of these gardens and write a paper explaining what you learned.
3. Nebuchadnezzar II (604-562 B.C.) is credited with building the Hanging Gardens. Form small groups and learn about other cultural aspects of the Mesopotamian civilization. Share what you learn with your class.

Language Arts

1. Write four diary entries from Sam's point-of-view that tell of the four most important things that forged the gardeners into a community of friends. Include your reasons for placing such importance on each event.
2. Write a newspaper article about the Gibb Street Garden.
3. Write a list of interview questions for a local television reporter to ask the gardeners for a special news report on the Gibb Street Garden.
4. Decide what was the major turning point that enabled the Gibb Street Garden to be a success. Write a paper telling why this one thing was more important than any other.

Math

1. If the average area of each gardener was five feet wide and twenty feet long, calculate the area of the average garden plot?
2. If Virgil's father planted four times as large an area as the other gardeners, calculate the area of the plot he planted in baby lettuce?
3. If an apartment rented for \$250.00 before the garden became popular, and the landlord raised the rent 15 percent because it had a view of the garden, calculate the new amount of rent for that apartment?

Science

1. Determine the primary vegetables produced in your state. Research the ideal weather conditions and water requirements for each vegetable. Also research pests and diseases commonly affecting this particular crop. Share your findings with your class.
2. Get different types of seed packets from a local gardening store. Following the directions on the packet, plant them as a class project. See which vegetable or flower grows best.

Student Involvement Activities

1. Explain the novel's theme or message.
2. Explain the lesson you think Paul Fleischman wants readers to learn from this novel.
3. Discuss in small groups the lessons you can take from this novel and apply to your own life.
4. Write a human interest newspaper article telling about the Gibb Street Garden.
5. Have a gardeners' party. Pretend you and your classmates are the gardeners. Plan and have a party that includes decorations, music and food from different cultures.

Alternate Assessment

1. Make a character list and tell something about each character.
2. Retell, in summary, the events of the book.
3. Explain why we should get to know people instead of judging them by their looks or their culture.
4. Explain how the garden helped people make friends.

Vocabulary

Match each boldface word with its meaning listed below. Write the letter of the meaning in the space next to the sentence number.

- | | | | |
|------------|------------------|-----------------------|--|
| A. actions | F. grocery store | K. with sureness | P. office employee who receives callers |
| B. empty | G. very large | L. acting out meaning | Q. talking without being understood |
| C. smell | H. digging tool | M. public square | R. opposition to the use of military force |
| D. changes | I. hand signals | N. strong winds | S. long, narrow opening |
| E. wobbled | J. lock | O. proper behavior | T. worked out an agreement |

- ___ 1. An icy wind **teetered** trash cans and turned my cheeks to marble.
- ___ 2. But in that **vacant** lot he would see me.
- ___ 3. Then a woman came over and gave us this long lecture about the word "**decorum**."
- ___ 4. He couldn't sit out in the **plaza** and talk—there aren't any plazas here.
- ___ 5. He wasn't in the **bodega** or the pawnshop.
- ___ 6. I found him standing in front of the garden, making **gestures** to a man with a shovel.
- ___ 7. She went into a store and bought him a **trowel** and four packets of seeds.
- ___ 8. I watched him carefully sprinkling the seeds into the **troughs** he'd made.
- ___ 9. I told about the trash all over again to this dolled-up **receptionist**.
- ___ 10. Sam worked promoting world peace and setting up conferences on **pacifism**.
- ___ 11. We **compromised** on pumpkins, after I explained how much money he could make.
- ___ 12. A man put wire about his garden, complete with a little gate and **padlock**.
- ___ 13. In India we have **vast** cities.
- ___ 14. I didn't get what he was **babbling** about, till the lettuce finally came up in wavy lines and bunches instead of straight rows.
- ___ 15. We work together in a dry cleaning store. At night I sew **alterations**.
- ___ 16. They were attracted by the **aroma** of fish.
- ___ 17. No chance for words. So I decided to give her some **deeds** instead.
- ___ 18. Back in England you'd see mothers pushing infants in strollers through winter **gales**.
- ___ 19. Mr. Myles chose the flowers **decisively**, ignoring the vegetables.
- ___ 20. **Pantomime** was often required to get over language barriers.

Comprehension Test A

Part I: Matching (20 points)

Read each character description. In the list below, find the character who matches the description. Write the letter of the character in the space next to the description number. Use each name only once.

- | | | |
|------------|--------------|-------------|
| A. Kim | E. Sam | H. Curtis |
| B. Ana | F. Virgil | I. Maricela |
| C. Gonzalo | G. Sae Young | J. Amir |
| D. Leona | | |

- _____ 1. grew tomatoes to win back Lateesha
- _____ 2. organized a contest to find a solution to the water problem
- _____ 3. was embarrassed by his father planting an area much larger than any other gardener
- _____ 4. was depressed about being pregnant
- _____ 5. thought the goal of Americans was to avoid contact with others
- _____ 6. was the first to plant anything in the lot
- _____ 7. watched from her apartment window as the ethnicity of the neighborhood changed over the years
- _____ 8. was beaten and robbed at the dry cleaning shop
- _____ 9. thought that learning English was the key to being treated more maturely
- _____ 10. opened garbage in an office to get the officials' attention

Part II: True/False (20 points)

Mark the following statements either T for true or F if any part is false.

- _____ 1. Ana thought Kim was burying drugs, money, or a gun.
- _____ 2. Ana called Wendell when the beans needed water.
- _____ 3. Gonzalo learned English at his job.
- _____ 4. Leona was friends with the mayor, so she just called him about the trash in the lot.
- _____ 5. Curtis bought Royce a sleeping bag.
- _____ 6. The gardeners collected rainwater in garbage cans.
- _____ 7. Mr. Myles would only plant flowers.
- _____ 8. Maricela loved working in the garden.
- _____ 9. Amir learned there was more to Poles than tough steel workers and women who cooked cabbage.
- _____ 10. Florence thought the seedfolks were wasting their time trying to garden in a vacant lot.

Comprehension Test A (Page 2)

Part III: Motivation (20 points)

Complete each phrase below with a reason or justification.

1. Kim worried that her father didn't know her because _____
2. Leona went to the Public Health Department because _____
3. Ana called Wendell to water the beans because _____
4. Gonzalo's Tío Juan was treated like a child because _____
5. Sae Young was afraid of people because _____
6. Curtis gave Royce money to watch his plants because _____
7. Sam hated people putting up fences, gates, and locks because _____
8. Amir was happy when others talked to him about his eggplants because _____
9. Royce was liked and trusted because _____
10. The first gardeners reminded Florence of seedfolks because _____

Part IV: Essay (40 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Explain how Kim's wanting to grow something led to the Gibb Street Garden.
2. Describe some of the lessons the gardeners learned.
3. Explain how Royce came to be liked and trusted by the gardeners.

Comprehension Test B

Part I: Matching (20 points)

Read each character description. In the list below, find the character who matches the description. Write the letter of the character in the space next to the description number. Use each name only once.

- | | | |
|------------|--------------|-----------|
| A. Kim | E. Sam | H. Curtis |
| B. Royce | F. Florence | I. Nora |
| C. Wendell | G. Sae Young | J. Amir |
| D. Leona | | |

- _____ 1. knew it would be difficult to get the city to pick up the garbage
- _____ 2. wanted her father to know that she could grow something
- _____ 3. was a watcher who was reminded of seedfolks by the early gardeners
- _____ 4. grew eggplants and thought the garden brought out the natural friendliness in people
- _____ 5. slept in the garden and protected it with a pitchfork
- _____ 6. was distressed that the groups of gardeners were segregating themselves by race
- _____ 7. was a nurse who brought Mr. Myles to the garden
- _____ 8. was a janitor who felt that a child was showing the neighborhood some things they could change
- _____ 9. tried to win back his girlfriend by growing tomatoes
- _____ 10. had been afraid of people, but wanted to reconnect

Part II: Fill in the Blank (20 points)

Write one or more words in each blank to make each statement true.

- Ana thought Kim was burying _____ in the vacant lot.
- Ana bought _____ so she could watch the activities in the lot.
- Gonzalo learned English by _____.
- Virgil's father's job was _____.
- Sam organized a contest to solve the _____ problem in the garden.
- Curtis bought Royce a _____ so he could sleep in the garden
- Maricela was forced to garden because she was enrolled in a program for _____.
- Royce and a Mexican man barbecued a _____ and it turned into a party for the gardeners.
- _____ became a real person to the gardeners, no longer just a dangerous looking black teenager.
- Mr. Myles had a large plastic trash barrel filled with dirt, and he only wanted to plant _____ in it.

Comprehension Test B (Page 2)

Part III: Multiple Choice (20 points)

Underline the word or phrase in the parenthesis that makes the statement correct.

1. Kim worried that her father didn't know her because **(he stayed in Vietnam when her family moved; he died before she was born)**.
2. Ana called Wendell when the beans needed water because **(it was his job to water them; her leg was hurt)**.
3. Leona went to the Public Health Department because **(she wanted the garbage picked up from the lot; the gardeners were selling their produce illegally)**.
4. Tío Juan knew how to care for plants because **(he'd been a farmer; he read the directions on the seed packet)**.
5. Curtis gave Royce money to guard his plants because **(the homeless man ripped some of them out of the ground; someone stole his first two tomatoes)**.
6. Sam had spent his life **(trying to get people of different races to get along; collecting taxes for the government)**.
7. Kim's beans didn't freeze because **(she waited until July to plant them; they were protected by a refrigerator)**.
8. Virgil's father planted a lot of baby lettuce because **(everyone in his family liked it; he planned to sell it)**.
9. Curtis planted his tomatoes right by the sidewalk so **(they would get plenty of sunlight; Lateesha could see them from her apartment)**.
10. The Polish woman wouldn't "cull" her plants because **(it reminded her of a concentration camp; she wanted all the produce she could grow)**.

Part IV: Essay (40 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Describe the neighborhood around the Gibb Street vacant lot before Kim planted lima beans.
2. Explain the changes that occurred within some of the gardeners. Support your conclusions with evidence from the book.
3. Explain the deal that Curtis worked out with Royce.

Answer Key

Vocabulary

- | | | | |
|------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. E | 6. I | 11. T | 16. C |
| 2. B | 7. H | 12. J | 17. A |
| 3. O | 8. S | 13. G | 18. N |
| 4. M | 9. P | 14. Q | 19. K |
| 5. F | 10. R | 15. D | 20. L |

COMPREHENSION TEST A

Part I: Matching (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. H | 6. A |
| 2. E | 7. B |
| 3. F | 8. G |
| 4. I | 9. C |
| 5. J | 10. D |

Part II: True/False(20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. T | 6. T |
| 2. T | 7. T |
| 3. F | 8. F |
| 4. F | 9. T |
| 5. T | 10. F |

Part III: Motivation (20 points)

1. he died before she was born
2. she couldn't accomplish anything on the phone
3. Kim hadn't been there in four days, and they were wilted
4. he couldn't speak English
5. she'd been beaten and robbed at her dry cleaning shop
6. someone stole the first two ripe tomatoes
7. he wanted people to get along and trust each other
8. many of them had never spoken to him before
9. people got to know him
10. they started something new that grew into something larger

Part IV: Essay (40 points)

Answers will vary.

COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I: Matching (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. D | 6. E |
| 2. A | 7. I |
| 3. F | 8. C |
| 4. J | 9. H |
| 5. B | 10. G |

Part II: Fill in the Blank (20 points)

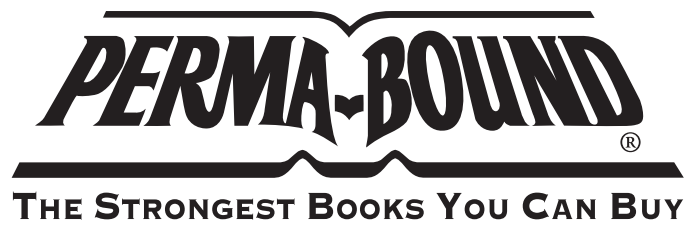
- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. drugs, money, or a gun | 6. sleeping bag |
| 2. binoculars | 7. pregnant teenagers |
| 3. watching television | 8. pig |
| 4. taxi driver | 9. Royce |
| 5. water | 10. flowers |

Part III: Multiple Choice (20 points)

1. he died before she was born
2. her leg was hurt
3. she wanted the garbage picked up from the lot
4. he'd been a farmer
5. someone stole his first two tomatoes
6. trying to get people of different races to get along
7. they were protected by a refrigerator
8. he planned to sell it
9. Lateesha could see them from her apartment
10. it reminded her of a concentration camp

Part IV: Essay (40 points)

Answers will vary.



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