



THEATER  
COMPANY

1973 50 YEARS 2023



# Seedfolks

Adapted from the book by  
Newbery Medal-winning author

**Paul Fleischman**

## INTERACTIVE LEARNING GUIDE

**This guide is for educators, parents, guardians, and caregivers. You name it - you can use it!**

This guide is filled with activities and conversation starters that can be used before or after your visit to the theater. Whether you are an educator, parent, or caregiver, the materials inside have been curated to extend the experience with this show.

**FOR BEST USER EXPERIENCE DOWNLOAD  
ACROBAT READER HERE**

## TAKE A LOOK AT WHAT'S INSIDE:

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

**CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES**

with Missouri GLE and National Core Arts Standards

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

**RESOURCES**



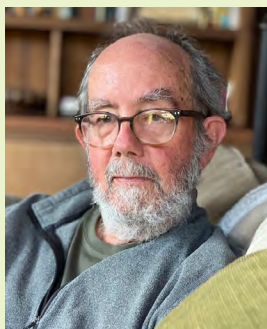


# Seedfolks

## SYNOPSIS

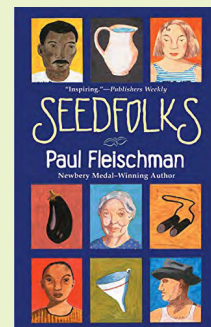
A vacant lot in a broken neighborhood in the middle of the city can become a lot of things. A garbage dump. A gathering spot for trouble. How could it ever be a source of hope? A dozen different characters and their stories come to life, beginning with Kim, a nine-year-old Vietnamese immigrant who plants six precious lima beans. One by one, the people of his community, many also immigrants, sow seeds of hope amid the dirt and grit, tending dreams to full bloom. As the garden grows, so does the community, blooming into something bigger, better, and beyond all expectations. As told by award-winning novelist Paul Fleischman, the garden draws neighbors out of their lonely isolation to rediscover and celebrate the community around them.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



### Paul Fleischman

Paul Fleischman's fiction, poetry, nonfiction, and plays are known for innovation and multiple points of view. He received the Newbery Medal for *Joyful Noise: Poems for Two Voices*, has been a National Book Award finalist, and was the 2012 U.S. nominee for the Hans Christian Andersen Award for the body of his work. He lives in Monterey, California.





## OBJECT TRANSFORMATION

In *Seedfolks*, one young person's choice to plant some seeds transforms a vacant lot and the whole community. As a neighborhood, they turn a vacant lot filled with garbage into a garden where people can gather and get to know one another. Practice making your own transformations!



1. **Take an everyday object that you have in your classroom.** This object could be a roll of tape, a book, a pen, or any object you would like to see transformed!
2. **Gather students in a standing up circle. Take turns transforming your chosen object into something new by pantomiming how you might use it.** The object can be used for anything other than its intended purpose. For example, a pencil may become a baseball bat or a magic wand.
3. **As one student pantomimes using the object,** have the rest of the class make guesses about what the object has been transformed into.
4. **If time allows,** go around the circle again with a different object!

[CLICK HERE TO WATCH THE VIDEO](#)

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**MISSOURI THEATER GRADE LEVEL EXPECTATIONS PAPIA K-8:**

Develop and apply skills to communicate ideas through theatrical performances

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**NATIONAL CORE ARTS STANDARDS ANCHOR STANDARD 10:**

Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art



## JOURNAL ENTRY



Write a diary entry from the perspective of one of the characters in the play. Talk about how you felt being a part of the garden, and what you think the garden will be like in years to come. If you would like, have students share their entry with a partner or small group, or even perform the entry as a monologue in front of the class.

**MISSOURI ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS GRADE LEVEL EXPECTATIONS W2C K-8:**  
Compose well-developed writing texts for audience and purpose theatrical performances

**NATIONAL CORE ARTS STANDARDS ANCHOR STANDARD 2:**  
Organize and develop artistic ideas and work

## SOUND AND BODY TRANSFORMATION



Throughout the play, the actors in *Seedfolks* change their voice and movement to portray the different characters. Now, it's your students' turn! With all students standing in a circle, create a sound and a movement and perform it to the person on your right. That person will repeat the same sound and movement, then let it change in their body and perform a new sound and motion inspired by the previous person on their right. Go all the way around the circle.

**MISSOURI THEATER GRADE LEVEL EXPECTATIONS PAP1A:**  
Develop and apply skills to communicate ideas through theatrical performances

**NATIONAL CORE ARTS STANDARDS ANCHOR STANDARD 1:**  
Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work



## MAKE CHANGE IN YOUR OWN COMMUNITY

Changing one vacant lot in *Seedfolks* created change for the whole community. Work with your students and administrators to find a place or another class in your school that could use some change. Think about creating your own community garden, tidying up the playground, or even reading to a group of younger students. After students have finished their project, have them write about what they expected the experience to be like and how their opinion changed after participating in the activity.

**MISSOURI ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS GRADE LEVEL EXPECTATIONS W2C K-8:**

Compose well-developed writing texts for audience and purpose

**MISSOURI PERSONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT GRADE LEVEL EXPECTATIONS PS2A, B, C K-8:**

Interacting with others in ways that respect individual and group differences.



Fresh Starts is an award-winning community garden in the JeffVanderLou neighborhood in St. Louis. Founded and run by the dynamic Rosie Willis, Fresh Starts maintains 15 garden beds that source hyper-local, fresh produce to its nonprofit community partners. This fall, Metro Theater Company staff, supporters, and friends are volunteering at Fresh Starts Community Garden to help prepare the garden beds for winter.





## CROSS THE LINE

Throughout the play, several characters in *Seedfolks* make assumptions about their neighbors, and then realize those assumptions are wrong. Try this activity to break down assumptions students may have about one another, and to help them see what they have in common!



- Arrange students in two lines on either side of the room, facing each other.
- Have them imagine there is a line down the middle.
- The facilitator will read a series of statements and if the statement is true for them they will walk across the room and join the other line.



This is also a non-verbal activity. Encourage students to notice who is crossing with them and who is standing on the line with them. If they have a question about one of the statements, it is whatever the statement means to them. Create statements based on what is happening in your school. Check out the examples below and then make your own!

### CROSS THE LINE IF...

- Reading is one of your favorite activities.
- You have planted in a garden.
- You have ever lost a loved one.
- You think your parents are too strict.

### REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

- What made you proud or excited to cross the line?
- Did anything make you nervous to cross the line?
- Were you ever surprised to find out you had something in common with someone else in the class?



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



1. The characters in *Seedfolks* learn from one another about gardening. Have you ever learned about something from a neighbor?
2. If you had the chance to plant something in a garden, what would you plant?
3. There are many characters in *Seedfolks*. Which character did you connect with the most?
4. During the play, lots of the neighbors make assumptions about one another and those assumptions turn out to be wrong. Have you ever made an assumption about someone and learned you were wrong?
5. What is a change you could make in your community?
6. Why do you think they chose to have three actors play so many different characters?
7. What did the actors do to make their characters different from one another?
8. The characters in *Seedfolks* find different ways to help one another. When have you helped someone else or when has someone helped you?



# RESOURCES FOR READERS AND EDUCATORS

## HOW TO TALK TO YOUNG PEOPLE ABOUT RACISM

### Kids Health

<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/talk-about-race.html>

### Sesame Street in Communities - Racial Justice

<https://sesamestreetincommunities.org/topics/racial-justice>

## HOW TO TALK TO YOUNG PEOPLE ABOUT HOUSING AND FOOD INSECURITY

### Talking to Your Kid About Racism - UNICEF

<https://www.unicef.org/parenting/talking-to-your-kids-about-racism>

### Feeding America - How to Talk to Kids about Hunger

<https://www.feedingamerica.org/take-action/talk-about-hunger>

## COMMUNITY GARDENING AND FARMING IN SAINT LOUIS

### Missouri Botanical Garden

<https://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/gardens-gardening/gardening-in-st.-louis/community-gardening>

### EarthDance

<https://earthdancefarms.org>

### Seed St. Louis

<https://seedstl.org>



## metroplays.org

### MISSION STATEMENT

Inspired by the intelligence and emotional wisdom of young people, we create professional theater, foster inclusive community, and nurture meaningful learning through the arts.

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