

NAME: _____



Activity One

Newspaper Article

The residents of Gibb Street are pretty much like anyone else in a large city. Neighbors may not even say hello let alone get together. People don't always know who lives just across the hall. That all changes with one simple act.

Kim didn't know what her actions would start. She simply wanted to plant some lima beans so that she and her father could share something. He had died before she was born. Pretty soon, it seems the whole neighborhood wants a plot of land in the vacant lot to grow some crops of their own. This stark change promotes a change in the attitudes the neighbors have toward one another. It's something that might even catch the eye of the local news.

Look up a news source online or consult a local newspaper to help show you on how to write a news story. The first sentence should be its own paragraph. It should sum up the who, what, when, where, why and how of the story. This sentence should hook the reader and make them want to continue reading the article. From there, work in more details about the garden and the neighborhood. How did it get its start? Who was involved? What were some of the challenges the gardeners faced?

Your news article should include interviews with people who were there from the beginning, like Kim, Ana, and Wendell. It should also include comments from those who came later. Include quotes from these people. They should tell the reader how these characters feel about the garden and how it has changed the neighborhood.

Your news article should include as much detail as you can from the book. The final product should be at least 400 words long and include all of the information above. It should also have:

- At least three interviews with quotes.
- An interview with Leona about cleaning the lot.
- Any interesting stories characters might have.
- An interesting detail readers might otherwise not know.



Activity Two

A New Character



Seedfolks is about how a community garden changed a suburban Cleveland neighborhood. It's also thirteen individual stories from those who live there. From Wendell, who feels a jolt of anxiety every time the phone rings thanks to his tragic past. To Curtis, who sees the error of his ways and seeks to earn back his former girlfriend by growing her a crop of tomatoes.

These characters, though their stories are short, are filled with depth. The author spends a lot of time establishing not only their personalities, but the backstories and heritage that define them.

This will be your challenge. In this activity, your task will be to write a character of your own that would fit within the world established in the book. Try to match both the writing style from the book as well as the author's efforts to provide a detailed backstory for each character.

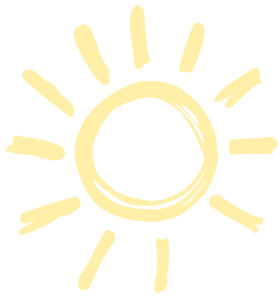
Try to weave your character's story into the overall story established in the book. You can position your story anywhere you want within the novel, so long as it makes sense within the overall story. For example, you could position your character's story before Kim's story or after Florence's story, just as long as you are able to tie in interaction between other characters or the garden itself.

Your new character should have a name and you should lay out your story similar to how the stories are laid out in the book. For example, you should use your character's name as the chapter name and you should draw a picture of your character to place at the beginning.

Your story should be at least 400 words long and also include:

- A new problem.
- Interaction between your character and another character from the book.
- A new setting.
- A description of how your character came to be involved in the garden.

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Activity Three

An Alternate Ending



Each chapter represents a different character's story about the Gibb Street community garden. There's a bit of a different feel to the overall plot and themes. The story begins and ends with Kim planting lima beans. In the beginning, Kim tells her own story of why she's planting the beans in a vacant, garbage-filled lot. In the end, Florence describes Kim coming back and planting beans the next spring. The garden has evolved from vacant lot to a community meeting place and a neighborhood asset. It's had such an impact that landlords have begun to charge more money for apartments that look out on the garden.

Was this how you imagined the story ending?

If this ending wasn't very satisfying for you, this bonus activity is your chance to end the story your way. Imagine you are the author and you're thinking about ending *Seedfolks* a different way. You will be writing an alternate ending that will conclude the story in an exciting new way.

Write down some notes about where you want to take the story in your ending to help guide you when you start to write. Maybe there's something you thought was lacking in the story that you might include.

Make sure your new ending is written in a style that matches the book. Ensure the story ends in a way that still wraps up the plot of the book.

Your ending should include:

- At least three returning characters.
- A new character.
- An interesting or exciting event readers might not see coming.
- Comment on how the garden has impacted the community.

Your finished product should be at least one typed, double-spaced page in length.

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Activity Four

Seedfolks: The Movie



"... A few weeks later, early in the evening, a woman screamed down the block from the garden. A man with a knife had taken her purse. Three men from the garden ran after him. I was surprised that I was one of them. Even more surprising, we caught him. Royce held the man to a wall with his pitchfork until the police arrived. I asked the others. Not one of us had ever chased a criminal before. And most likely we wouldn't have except near the garden. There, you felt part of a community."

In this activity, your task will be to recreate a pivotal scene from the book as a movie script. You will be the screenwriter. Your job is to take information from the book and transform it into a screenplay that will be used to film a movie scene. For example, the scene depicted above could look like:

Exterior – Evening

Royce, Amir, and a few others mill about in their plots, each wrapped up in their own work. It's quiet and getting near dark when the silence is broken by a woman's scream.

Amir
What's that?

Woman
Help, he's got my purse!

Royce, Amir and another man take off down the street, none of them taking a moment to consider the danger. They're protecting their community.

Royce
Stop!

The three men catch up to the thief who has found himself cornered in an alley. Royce, absentmindedly still holding his pitchfork, now extends it realizing the man could be dangerous.

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Activity Five

Character Origins



Throughout *Seedfolks* it becomes clear there is a diverse collection of individuals living near the Gibb Street community garden. People come from many places including Mexico and Haiti. Others are from closer places like Colorado and Kentucky.

In this bonus activity, you will use information from the book to illustrate where each character is originally from in relation to the site of the garden. Find or trace yourself a blank world map that has enough space for you to be able to write down some information. Go through the book and make notes about where each character is originally from (wherever possible).

Once you've gathered up all of this information, mark each location with a star on your world map. Also place a star in the approximate location of the community garden. When you place your stars, write down the character who comes from the location. Include a short description of the character (approximate age, identifiable traits, personality, character history). Now, connect each location to the location of the community garden with a line.

Write a short paragraph describing any connections you're able to see between characters. For example, maybe two characters come from countries that are close to one another. Maybe one character is from a place that is further away than most others. The paragraph should be about 250 words in length.

Your map should include:

- The location of any other places or landmarks mentioned in the book and the locations connection to the story.
- A legend with shapes identifying the different types of locations (e.g. stars for characters' country of origin, hearts for other locations).
- A different symbol marking your home.
- Lots of color.

Make sure you have some fun with your map.

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Activity Six

A Community Garden



The community garden in *Seedfolks* starts out as a vacant lot full of trash, broken glass and rats. It's a place that attracts crime and it's not somewhere many people would want to visit. By the end of the story, even those who don't take part in the gardening get a measure of satisfaction watching the work that goes on there.

This entire transformation happens thanks to one person. Kim didn't know her actions would inspire others to begin gardening. In this activity it will be your goal. Your task will be to identify a place in your hometown or near your home that you think would be an ideal spot to create a community garden.

Take a photograph of the location (make sure it is accessible to the public and not on private property). Use the photo to help you envision how you would lay out your ideal community garden on that spot.

Using a large piece of poster board, draw an overhead view of the location. Draw on any existing buildings, paths, trees or other features. Then, draw your garden in a way that wouldn't affect these existing features. Be creative with it.

Once you've finished your drawing, write a short paragraph describing why you think the location would be ideal for a community garden. This should be about 200 words.

Your drawing should:

- Capture existing features.
- Have some interesting or exciting new feature.
- Have plenty of color.
- Include text identifying what each feature is.