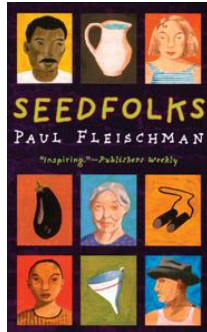


Seedfolks: A 4th Grade Literary Focus Unit
Created by:
Josh Heaston

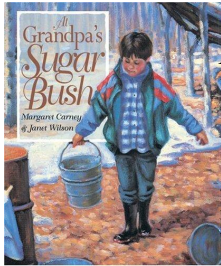


Featured Selection

Seedfolks by Paul Fleischman. New York: HarperCollins, 1997.

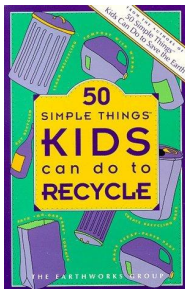
Written at a third or fourth grade level, Paul Fleischman's *Seedfolks* looks at a Cleveland neighborhood and shows how one person can start to make a huge change. Fleischman takes the perspectives of thirteen members of the neighborhood. Each neighbor telling how they got involved with the transformation of the vacant lot. Starting with Kim, the little school girl who started the transformation by planting six beans in remembrance of her father's death. Each chapter after is a different neighbor describing how they got involved in the process and what they are did to help transform the lot. Different races and cultures are brought together for one thing and one thing only, the garden.

Related Materials



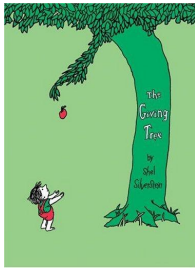
At Grandpa's Sugar Bush by Margaret Carney and Janet Wilson. New York: Kids Can Press, 1998. (4th or 5th grade)

This story shows how and grandson helps his grandfather with his maple syrup harvesting. This also shows how working together to produce something is worth the time and effort.



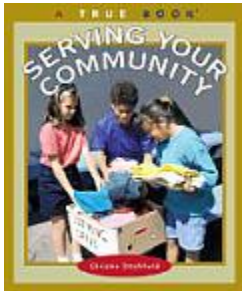
50 Simple Things Kids Can Do to Recycle by Earthworks Group. Ashland: Earthworks Press, 1994. (4th-6th grade)

After reading *Seedfolks*, students can use this to determine how to properly recycle the items in the lot. Students will also use these ideas in the culminating activity.



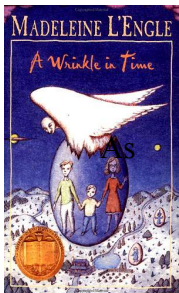
The Giving Tree by Shel Silverstein. New York: HarperCollins, 1964. (3rd grade)

This gives another perspective on how you can help another person by giving things that you have. Shows relationships being made based around plants and how helpful they are.



Serving Your Community (True Books: Civics) by Christin Ditchfield. Dublin: Children's Press, 2004. (4th or 5th grade)

This gives the students other references to possible things they can do to help out in their community. This will also give students ideas for the culminating activity.



A Wrinkle in Time by Madeleine L'Engle. New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc., 1962. (4th or 5th grade)

Students will have another example of teamwork. They will use the examples of teamwork and apply it to the culminating activity.

Goals

- Students will learn how to help their community in different ways and be able to put that knowledge into action.
- Students will be able to write a story about something that they have done in their community, just like those that gave view points in *Seedfolks*.
- Students will be able to compare and contrast characters in the story and real life people by making Venn diagrams.
- Students will develop an appreciation for racial diversity and embrace the fact that everyone can help in a different way.
- Students will understand the growing process of plants.
- Students will be able to demonstrate the importance of helping their community by making a plan to help out in a surrounding neighborhood.
- Students will understand how the garden and other objects in the neighborhood are used as figurative language.

Standards

English:

- 4.1.1 Read aloud grade-level-appropriate narrative text (stories) and expository text (information) with fluency and accuracy and with appropriate timing, changes in voice, and expression.
- 4.3.3 Use knowledge of the situation, setting, and a character's traits, motivations, and feelings to determine the causes for that character's actions.
- 4.3.5 Define figurative language, such as similes, metaphors, hyperbole, or personification, and identify its use in literary works.
- 4.5.1 Write narratives (stories) that:
 - *include ideas, observations, or memories of an event or experience.
 - *provide a context to allow the reader to imagine the world of the event or experience.
 - *use concrete sensory details.
- 4.6.2 Use simple sentences (*Dr. Vincent Stone is my dentist.*) and compound sentences (*His assistant cleans my teeth, and Dr. Stone checks for cavities.*) in writing.
- 4.7.1 Ask thoughtful questions and respond orally to relevant questions with appropriate elaboration.
- 4.7.3 Identify how language usage (sayings and expressions) reflects regions and cultures.

Science:

- 4.1.9 Explain how some products and materials are easier to recycle than others.
- 4.4.3 Observe and describe that organisms interact with one another in various ways, such as providing food, pollination, and seed dispersal.
- 4.4.4 Observe and describe that some source of energy is needed for all organisms to stay alive and grow.

Unit Plan

Pre-Reading

Activity: Bring in pictures of different gardens or parks. Also have a gardener or a parks department worker come in and discuss the importance of gardens and keeping the earth free of litter and recycling. Possibly take a field trip to Omni-Source type plant and learn about recycling. Grading will be based on participation and behavior.

Grouping: The whole class

Reading

Activity: Teacher will read the first character's story and then ask for a student volunteer to read the next aloud to the class. While the first two stories are read stop and ask questions about the character and their backgrounds, similarities and differences from them. Grading will be based on participation.

Grouping: Individuals, buddy reading

Responding

Activity: Have students discuss different topics about the story through their journals. A new topic will be given when a new chapter is read. Example being, how does the garden itself become a metaphor for what happens among its members? Other questions are at:

<http://www.harperchildrens.com/schoolhouse/TeachersGuides/seedfolks.htm>.

Students can also write different questions that they have about the story in their journals. At the end of the week we will come together as a class and discuss the journal questions and any other questions that the class has about the book. Journals will be graded.

Grouping: Individuals for the in depth look at the question/journal writing and the whole class for the classroom discussion. If students feel comfortable they can get into small group and discuss briefly what they wrote.

Exploring

Activity: Have different members of the community and discuss their cultural background. The speakers will be of the same background as some of the characters in the book. For example have a Hispanic member come in and give their cultural background. After the speaker is finished the students can ask questions, possibly ones that relate to the story. When the speaker leaves, the students will go back and look at the text and by using a Venn diagram they will compare and contrast the backgrounds of the speaker and the character. Students will also write a thank-you letter to the speaker for coming in and sharing their background. Students will be graded on based on their thank-you letters(grammar and spelling) and completion of Venn diagrams.

Grouping: Whole class for the speaker and individual for writing activities

Applying

Activity: After students have developed a plan to help the surrounding neighborhood, students will go out into the community and put their plan into action. After students have done their service project, individually they will write a reflection on what they thought of this experience (did they like it, was it meaningful, etc.). Students will be graded based on their participation and keeping busy during the time spent at the service project.

Grouping: Service Project will be the whole class unless there is a division in thoughts and two emerge and I have parent volunteers that would be willing to go with another group and supervise them, and then the class would be divided in half.

Assignment Checklist:

_____ **Journal entries for classroom discussions (3)**

_____ **Completed Venn diagrams that were completed(3)**

_____ **Personal story about community involvement**

_____ **Journal about the service project (Before and after completion)**

_____ **Journals about the lima bean plants growing(9)**

_____ **Classroom discussion involvement**

_____ **Service Project involvement**

_____ **Thank-you letters(8)**

<p><u>day 1 (1 hour)</u> Do Pre-reading activity and give brief book talk to get students interested in the book. Plant lima beans in cups and watch grow. Journal entry(@) will be written on certain day with that label.</p>	<p><u>day 2 (30 min.)</u> Read the first chapter aloud to class and have student volunteer read chapter two. First journal entry to be done. Prepare students for guest speaker and discuss what is expected of them.</p>	<p><u>day 3 (45 min.)</u> Have guest speaker* that covers character one. Have students do Venn diagram and prepare questions for guest speaker two.</p>	<p><u>day 4 (45 min.)</u> 2nd guest speaker* come in and students create another Venn diagram. Write in journals for discussion.</p>	<p><u>day 5 (20 min.)</u> Have students read the 3rd character for following class and be ready to have classroom discussion about characters 1-3.@</p>
<p><u>day 6 (45 min.)</u> Guest speaker* and afterwards have students discuss the similarities and differences and journal questions.</p>	<p><u>day 7 (30 min.)</u> Read the 4th and 5th characters aloud. Discuss possible guest speakers that the students may know or be interested in hearing.@</p>	<p><u>day 8 (20 min.)</u> Introduce the other books and see if students can make the connection that the books share. Also introduce the concept of community service.</p>	<p><u>day 9 (1 hour)</u> Have the 4th guest speaker*. Have students discuss their involvement with community service and ideas that they may have. Introduce journal question(s) for discussion.</p>	<p><u>day 10 (30 min.)</u> Have students read 6th-8th characters and be prepared to discuss characters 4-8. Have students be thinking of what character (of 6-8) they would like to have a guest speaker on.@</p>
<p><u>day 11 (45 min.)</u> 5th guest speaker* and Venn diagram. Discuss journal questions and characters 6-8. Decide on the speaker.@</p>	<p><u>day 12 (30 min.)</u> Have students look at books to think of a community service project they want to do. 9th and 10th characters are read.</p>	<p><u>day 13 (20 min.)</u> Have students brainstorm ideas for the story that they will write about themselves and what they did to help their community.</p>	<p><u>day 14 (1 hour)</u> Guest speaker* that the students have chosen. Discuss the other characters not discussed yet. Begin writing personal stories. Send permission slips home for the service project and ask for parent volunteers.</p>	<p><u>day 15 (1 hour)</u> Finish up the personal stories and read aloud 11th-13th character. Introduce final journal questions. Students pick 2 more guest speakers.@</p>

<p><u>day 16 (30 min.)</u> Have students discuss the progress that the lima beans have made since the beginning of the unit. Discuss the plans for the service project.</p>	<p><u>day 17 (30 min.)</u> Have students write in their journals about what they expect to achieve by doing the service project. Ask for volunteers to read personal stories.@</p>	<p><u>day 18 (45 min.)</u> Have guest speaker* and have classroom discussion for the similarities and differences. Ask students to start to bring in supplies for the service project.</p>	<p><u>day 19 (30 min.)</u> Have last guest speaker*. Wrap up the book with final discussion and feelings on the books that were incorporated with the unit.@</p>	<p><u>day 20 (half day)</u> SERVICE PROJECT!!!</p>
<p><u>day 21 (half day)</u> SERVICE PROJECT!!!</p>	<p><u>day 22 (20 min.)</u> Have students write a reflection on the service project.@</p>	<p><u>day 23 (20 min.)</u> Go over the lima beans again and discuss how the beans grew. Have students take them home.</p>		

*Guest speakers can be changed to correspond to different characters.

- Other subject areas will be included during that time of the day. For example, in math students will use their knowledge of recycling prices and determine how much money they would receive if they turned in X amount of recyclable items.