

**Using *Seedfolks* with English Language Learners:
A Resource File for ESL and EFL Teachers**

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A community garden in Montreal, Canada



Overview of *Seedfolks*

The chart below is a brief overview of the stories in *Seedfolks*. It can also serve as a template for a student activity. The teacher can create a similar table and provide the information about Kim, but

leave the rest blank. The result is a graphic organizer that students complete as they read the book.

	Narrator	Plants	Family origin	Personal information	Plot
1	Kim	Beans	Vietnam	9 years old, girl	She plants beans but doesn't know how to care for them.
2	Ana		Romania, maybe	Elderly, housebound	At first, she thinks Kim is burying drugs. Later, she wants to help.
3	Wendell			Middle aged school janitor	He is a bitter man because of past experiences. Kim inspires him.
4	Gonzalo and Tio Juan		Guatemala	8 th grader who takes cares of aging uncle	Gonzalo thinks of his uncle (tio) Juan as helpless and childlike until he sees him in the garden.
5	Leona	Golden-rod for tea	Atlanta, GA African-American	Mother of 2 high school students	She gets the Public Health Department to clean up the vacant lot.
6	Sam and Puerto Rican teen	Pumpkins	Jewish	Retired non-profit organizer; 78 years old	A community organizer, he holds a contest and hires a teen to help
7	Virgil and his father	Baby lettuce	Haiti	Virgil 6 th grader Father is taxi driver	They plant baby lettuce, but something happens to it.
8	Sae Young	Hot peppers	Korea	Widow, no children, dry cleaning business	Since she was mugged, she hasn't trusted people. She tells us more about Sam's contest.
9	Curtis and Royce	Tomatoes		28 years old but story begins when he was 23; Royce is homeless	Curtis is growing up and in love. He hires Royce to watch the garden.
10	Nora and Mr. Myles	Flowers	UK, African American	Caregiver (Nora) and elderly stroke victim	Nora cares for Mr. Myles. They plant flowers.
11	Maricela	Radishes and more	Mexico	16 years old and pregnant	She resents her pregnancy, but talking with Leona transforms her.
12	Amir	Many vegetables	India	Married with son, fabric store manager	He notices the garden has brought neighbors together. This helps him rethink his prejudices.
13	Florence		African American	Retired librarian, has arthritis	She wants to garden but cannot because of arthritis.
(14)	(optional) Have your students tell and/or write Chapter 14—their own chapter about the garden.				
(15)	(optional) Read Paul Fleischman's story behind the story at the end of the book.				

Before Reading

Introduction

Your students will need some background information before they begin reading each new chapter of *Seedfolks*. Depending on your students' level, the goals of your course, and whether you are teaching in an ESL or EFL setting, one or more of the following may help your students preview the story and/or set a purpose for reading.

Create Curiosity

Give your students an overview of the new chapter as a storyteller would. Keep your English very simple, and try to use a similar routine with each chapter to maximize comprehensibility. Begin with, for example, "Today we will meet Sam. Sam is Jewish. At the beginning of his story, he has a lot of hope for the garden. By the end of the story, however, he is less hopeful. Let's find out why."

One-Minute Read

Give students one minute to skim any part of the new chapter that they want to—first page, middle, or last page. Then, have them close their books and call out words, phrases, or ideas that they recall. Write them on the board in word clusters or a semantic map. Ask volunteers to use the words to make predictions about the story, or rephrase their recollections as questions, for example, "Tomatoes? Yes, let's try to find out why tomatoes are so important to Curtis."

Picture It

This strategy is built on the maxim "a picture is worth a thousand words." For language learners, a few good pictures can help your students understand key concepts, vocabulary, and cultural information without the need for wordy explanations or translation. For example, to introduce Kim's story, you might use the pictures and text in the "Who is the Storyteller?" activity. If you do not have access to a computer or projector, you can help students "picture" the story in other ways. For example, "Look at the picture on page 5 and the last word on page 10 in *Seedfolks*. They are the same. Ana is old and cannot go outside much anymore. Why do you think she bought binoculars?"

Think Local

Use student-centered or locally relevant stories or issues to introduce the new character or theme. For example, to introduce Leona's chapter, you might ask, "Does anyone here drink herbal tea? What kind? Why? If someone in your family gets sick, do you take medicine or use a home cure? Why? How do you feel about herbal medicine and modern medicine? In our new chapter, we are going to meet a family that drinks herbal tea every day."



Ala Wai Community Garden, Honolulu, HI

Reading the Story

Introduction

There are many ways to learn a story besides just reading it from beginning to end. Think about children who listen to stories that their parents tell, who hear stories that their parents read, who begin to read with their parents or teachers, and who finally read stories on their own. They also watch

stories on TV and in the movies. You can utilize all these ways to help your students “read” *Seedfolks*, too. The following suggestions may give you ideas about the best way to help your students get the story—by listening, by reading, or with a combination of the two.

In-Class Workshop

After previewing the chapter, give students a few minutes of reading time in class to begin the new chapter, ideally just 5-10 minutes before the end of class. Encourage them to read as much as they can in the limited amount of time. Also, encourage them to read with a buddy, ask questions, or help each other. Circulate to answer questions and assist as needed. When students see how others are working together or receiving help, they will begin try different reading strategies as well. Avoid letting this go too long, however, or the energy level in the class will begin to fade. Tell students to complete the reading at home.

Listen and Read

Play the CD and have students follow along as they listen. They will understand much more than if they just read by themselves. There are a number of ways to utilize the CD.

- *Just read and listen.* If the book is just slightly difficult for students, following along with the book while they listen to the CD can help them see that they can understand the overall story even if they do not understand every word or phrase, an important discovery for language learners.
- *Play excerpts.* If the CD is too fast for your students’ comfort level, play only the first page or two so they hear the storyteller’s voice, dialect, and a bit of the story. Then, continue reading with your voice at a pace that is better suited to their level or let them continue reading on their own.
- *Play and pause.* When you read or play the CD, pause to rephrase, answer questions, give an example, or explain as you go. This will make the story more understandable than if you just play the CD straight through. If you have a mixed ability class, advanced students can listen with books closed while intermediate students listen and read along with books open.
- *Note for non-native English speaking teachers:* Do not worry about your accent if you read to your students. Remember that the narrators in *Seedfolks* speak a variety of English dialects, and several of them are non-native speakers of English. If you help your students understand as you read, they will quickly forget that you do not sound like a native speaker of English. More important, the example that you set for them as a non-native speaker who enjoys and successfully uses English far outweighs your accent or any errors that you make.



Danny Woo Community Garden, Seattle, WA

Giving Options

Students read at different paces and have differing levels of proficiency. Rather than always assigning students to read the whole chapter you can suggest “Read the rest of the chapter or as much as you can in 30 minutes.” This simple option is a way of differentiating instruction and gives students autonomy. If they cannot finish, they will learn what happens from the follow up discussion in class. Often, after reaching the time limit, they will have read enough of the story that they want to finish on their own, or they will push themselves to read faster so they can finish more of the story within the time that they have, another important reading skill.

While-Reading Questions

Assigned readings are frequently accompanied by long lists of comprehension questions. Too often these questions are used as quizzes or time-consuming homework assignments. However, they can also serve as a valuable study aids. If you build your questions in chronological order on points that you consider important, students will have a purpose for reading, learn to skim and scan in the context of reading their story, and pick up speed in the process. Caution: Be sure to phrase your questions so that they cannot be answered correctly simply by pulling words from the novel without understanding.



Lettuce harvest, Kailua, HI

Selected Passages

Most chapters have both easy and challenging passages. Give your students an oral overview of the difficult passages, so that they will have more background knowledge when they read them on their own.

Encourage them to write margin notes for the passages as you speak. This will teach them important text annotation skills. For example:

On page 11, Wendell tells us why he doesn't like phone calls. Twice (or two times) in the past he has received terrible news in phone calls. Can you see what the terrible news was?

On page 13, Wendell tells us he was not happy when Ana told him to take care of Kim's plants. Can you find the words that tell what Wendell's occupation is? Why doesn't he like people telling him what to do?

On page 15, you will see how Kim's bean plants helped Wendell put away some of his bitterness and see his life in a new way.

After Reading

On the pages that follow are numerous post-reading activities. Some focus on plot and character, others on theme, and still others on language development. Please survey them all and then choose the one(s) that are best suited for your setting and student audience.

Understanding Character

Introduction

Each chapter in *Seedfolks* is told in first person by a different narrator. The narrators have diverse backgrounds, just as Americans do. They are men and women, old and young, new immigrants and people whose families have been in the U.S. for many generations. Their personal stories will be of

interest to your students because they deal with issues like immigration, urban violence, teen pregnancy, aging, prejudice, and stereotyping, among others. Below are brief descriptions of several activities that you can use or adapt to help students recall the characters and retell their stories.

Where in the World?

This is a post-reading activity focused on world geography. The *Seedfolks* narrators have diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds. By locating the states or countries where their families or ancestors came from, readers learn about the world and develop appreciation for the stories in other people's lives. Download and print a small world map and hang it in the middle of a bulletin board space. Write a card for Kim and connect it to Vietnam with a piece of string. Have students complete additional cards for additional stories as they read them. With just a few words, they can show the character's name, gender, age, country of origin, other language(s), and connection to the community garden.



World map

Kim, girl, 9, Vietnam, Vietnamese, planted seeds to honor her father

Who Is the Storyteller?

This activity (see next page) can be used to preview or review the stories in each chapter. For example, as the teacher, you can prepare additional pages like this one for other characters, or you might use these ideas to prepare a short PowerPoint slide show to give students essential background knowledge, words, and images for the new story. Or, give students this page as an example and ask them to prepare similar pages for the other narrators using drawings, images, and a few words to remember key ideas from their stories. Later, the storyteller pages can be used as a set of notes to help student tell and retell the stories in the book.

Who is the storyteller?

Student Name: _____

Storyteller: Kim



Vietnamese altar for the dead

Personal story

Name: Kim, 9-year-old girl

Family from Vietnam

Moved to Cleveland

Never met father

Father was farmer

Wanted father to be proud of her

Planted beans in empty lot near her apartment building



Flag of Vietnam



Lima beans

Connection to the garden

First person to plant seeds there

Exploring Theme

Introduction

Good works of literature, like *Seedfolks*, introduce readers to themes, topics, and issues that bind all people together across time, space, culture, and language. The topics and activities suggested below can open the door to further reading, research,

writing, oral presentations, poster discussions, and short and long-term projects that your students can explore individually, in small groups, or as a class. The possibilities are endless, and the more times you read *Seedfolks*, the more ideas you will find.

Gardening, Sustainability, and Care for the Environment

Nearly everyone has pleasant childhood memories of planting seeds or watching things grow. Unfortunately, modern urban life often distances adults from gardens, farms, or experiences with growing things. *Seedfolks* can help us connect our students to the Earth once again.

- Connect your study of *Seedfolks* to local celebrations of Earth Day (April 22), National Public Gardens Day (in the U.S. on May 6), local harvest festivals, or other special events centered on the earth, land, or agriculture.
- Invite a guest speaker to talk to your class—a professional gardener or farmer or a parent, family friend, or someone on the school staff with a gardening hobby.
- Contact the educational department of a local park or garden to ask about special rates or programs designed to teach young people about gardens and gardening.
- Watch for opportunities for your students to volunteer at public events or places engaged in care for the environment.
- Ask school officials whether your students can make a project out of tending a small herb or flower garden to beautify your school. Perhaps a parent or custodian will volunteer to help them.
- In *Seedfolks*, experienced gardeners taught novice gardeners many things. Have your students work in groups to visit a garden and talk with an experienced gardener. What knowledge, tips, or stories can they bring back to the class? Perhaps they can produce their own *Seedfolks* collection of stories.



A community garden in Brooklyn, NY

Plants, Vegetables, and Food

Food is a fantastic topic for any language class. Students can handle it, explore it, prepare it, share it, and eat it. It can be used with classes at all levels. Here are just a few examples to show the range of possibilities from very low to relatively advanced level.

- Have students bring a favorite vegetable, fruit, flower, or plant to school for a topic-centered Show and Tell lesson. What is it called? What color is it? Let's describe it with our senses. Let's use *wh-* questions to talk about it: Where does it grow? How can we use it? Where did you get it?
- Have students investigate food origins. They may be surprised to learn that the tomato that they associate with Italian pasta sauces originally came from South America or that okra and yam are words and foods of African origin.
- Plan a visit to a local farmers' market. Help students plan ahead to talk to a vendor and ask where a particular food comes from, what it costs, how it gets to market, etc.
- Discuss the relationship between food, diet, health, and lifestyle decisions. Are you or do you have students who are vegetarian or who have food allergies or phobias? Are they vegetarian for health, religious, or moral reasons? Who buys local and who buys cheap? How to we make such decisions about how we live, and what do we think about other people who make different decisions than we do?
- Discuss traditional and modern medicine. Ask students to collect stories from their family about how parents and grandparents treat illness or prevent sickness with herbs, teas, or other traditional medicines. Depending on the age or level of your students, they may also wish to explore emotional as well as physical health. Recall that in her story, Nora tells us that the ancient Egyptians considered walking through a garden as emotional therapy, and Maricela seems to experiences this as she talks to Leona.

Attitudes Toward Others

Throughout the book, we read that the storytellers make assumptions or express stereotypes about others, but that through interaction, they rethink their original attitudes. Have students keep track of the changes in thinking of the storytellers or in the friends and family members of the storytellers. Talking or writing about such change allows your students to examine important issues in every community on earth and practice using English words and phrases showing comparison and contrast or change such as *before and after*, *at first...but then*, and so on.



Ala Wai community garden, Honolulu, HI

Examples:

- (1) In the story: At first, Gonzalo thinks of Uncle (Tio) Juan as helpless, like a baby. Gonzalo has to “babysit” his uncle. Later, when Gonzalo sees his uncle at work in the garden, he realizes he was wrong. He learns that Tio Juan is an expert at gardening and that he, Gonzalo, is not as smart as he thought he was.
- (2) In Our Community: Write statements such as the following on the board, adjusting them to fit your local community. Then, ask students how they would complete the statements, how their parents would complete them, how they have heard others complete them, and so on. Then, use them for discussion.

People in Tokyo are...
People in Osaka are...
Foreigners from Asia are...
Foreigners from Europe are...
Foreigners from English speaking countries are...



Then, reread together pages 76–77 from Amir’s story, and see whether your students see any parallels between Amir and themselves.

A community garden in Sacramento, CA

Immigration and Migration

Most people know someone—a family member or friend—who has moved away from their childhood home, so they will probably be able to identify with one or more the stories of migration in *Seedfolks*.

- Have students tell the story of someone they know. Who is s/he? Where was she from? When did she leave and why? Where did she go and why? What is she doing now? Is she happy with her decision to move? Would you do what she did? Why or why not?
- Look at the people in your local community (or class) who are considered outsiders by long-time residents. Help your students learn about their origins, the work that they do in your community, their reasons for leaving their homes, and their reasons for coming to your community.

Use the *Seedfolks* stories to connect to current regional or world news. Kim’s family was probably in the United States as a result of the Vietnam War in the 1960s and 70s. What war, natural disaster, or other events are causing people to migrate now? From where to where? The United Nations High Commission on Refugees has free lesson plans and teaching materials about current groups of displaced persons and refugees. Visit http://www.unrefugees.org/site/c.lfiQKSOWFqG/b.4803795/k.673C/Free_Teaching_Materials.htm

Transformation

Nearly everyone in *Seedfolks* is somehow transformed because of working, watching people, or interacting with others in the garden. This theme provides an opportunity for interesting discussions as students consider how characters were similar, different, motivated, or changed as a result of events in the story. By creating a simple graphic organizer, you can help scaffold students' conversations with their peers. Here are some examples.

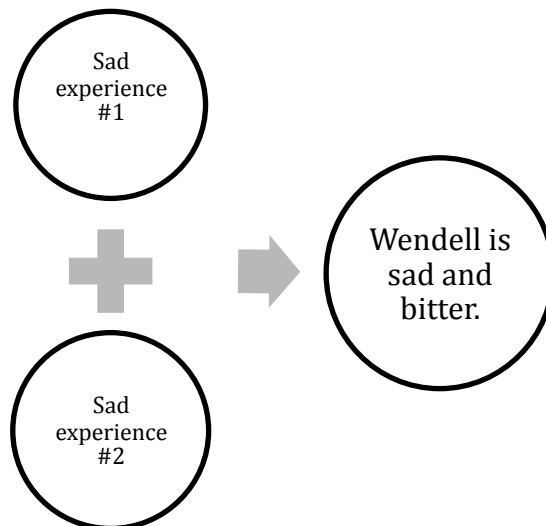
(1) Comparing two characters

Sam and Amir have somewhat opposite changes of thought about the garden from the beginning of their stories to the end. Have students explore what happened to each man.

	How did he feel at the beginning? Why?	What happened?	How did he feel at the end? Why?
Sam			
Amir			

(2) Examining Change Within a Character

The attitudes held by several of the characters in *Seedfolks* were formed before we “meet” them in the story. Then, something happens in the story, and they begin to change. This is an opportunity to talk about cause and effect relationships, but it can be difficult for language learners to express these ideas. Again, a graphic organizer can help them see and show such ideas. For example, this graphic may help students show that they understand why Wendell is a sad and bitter man.



Developing English Language Skills

Introduction

Research indicates that language learners benefit from making and using word cards or personal dictionaries to help learn and review new vocabulary. Certainly most language learners intuitively feel the need to spend considerable time studying vocabulary. There are many possibilities for using *Seedfolks* to help your students build their everyday or academic vocabulary, depending on the purpose of your program and goals of your

students. Below are several examples of word lists that individual students, small groups, or your entire class could develop as study guides, personal dictionaries, or word cards.

In addition to focusing on vocabulary, *Seedfolks* provides the context for focusing on many other interesting or important features of English. Some of these are illustrated below.

Vocabulary Study

People, Places, and Language Names.

These words are easy to locate because they are proper nouns and begin with capital letters. Students can take turns being in charge of locating these words, identifying the associated places on a map or globe, and teaching their classmates the related word forms. They might make a table like this one in their notebook or on a chart in the classroom.



Ala Wai community garden, Honolulu, HI

	Storyteller	Place names	Groups of People	Languages
1	Kim	Vietnam	Vietnamese	Vietnamese
2	Ana	Rumania, Slovakia, Italy, Mexico, Cambodia	Rumanian, Slovak, Italian, Mexican, Cambodian Ana also talks about Negros, a term for African Americans that is no longer used.	Rumanian, Slovakian, Italian, Spanish, Cambodia
3	Wendell	United States	Americans	English

Concrete Nouns.

Words for everyday objects can often be understood and remembered directly with pictures, avoiding the need for wordy or confusing definitions.

Locate the passages mentioned below. Draw pictures on the right to show your understanding.		
Page	Passage	Words and Pictures
4	What did Kim see in the vacant lot? Draw and label five things.	
9	What did Ana take to the vacant lot? Draw and label two things.	

Hobbies, Occupations, and Skills.

The storytellers in *Seedfolks* use many occupation words, which provide excellent opportunities to build action verb vocabulary and use the always-challenging third person *-s* forms. You may also talk about how job descriptions and tasks change over time. For example, Ana was a *typist*; today her grandson might get a similar job as a *data entry clerk*.

	Who?	Occupation, Hobby, Etc.	What does s/he do? Try to name 3-5 five activities
1	Kim	Student (p 1)	A student studies, takes tests, and worries a lot.
2	Kim' father	Farmer (p 4)	A farmer plants seeds, waters the plants, pulls weeds, harvests the crops, and prays for rain.
3	Ana (now)	Watching the neighborhood	Ana uses her binoculars, watches people, and stays home.
4	Ana (past)	Typist (8)	A typist reads boss's notes, types letters...
5	Wendell	Janitor (13)	

Specialized Terms.

Different chapters lend themselves to focus on particular types or categories of words that can make for an interesting vocabulary lesson. For example:

- *Sam's* story is rich in compound words including sidewalk, jumpsuits, anyone, fishermen, battlefields, teenager, businessman, newcomers, ashtrays, gunshots, someone, and something. Without going too deeply into the morphological makeup of compounds, help students see how these words are created and encourage them to look for others as they read further.
- *Curtis* is a body builder who talks about his muscles. Download an image of the



Ala Wai community garden, Honolulu, HI

upper body muscles with labels to show your students. Then, read the opening lines of his story where he mentions his deltoids (the muscles over his shoulders, quads (from quadriceps, muscles in the upper legs), pecs (from pectorals, muscles over the chest), and ceps (from biceps, muscles in the upper arms). Then, point out that these words show two different ways of abbreviating words to make them easier to say—clipping the end of pectorals, a very common word formation process, and clipping the beginning of biceps, a much less common process. Although you probably do not want to spend too much time teaching or testing such specialized words, many young people have first-hand experience with sports injuries and may enjoy learning the name of the muscle they tore or sprained.

- *Maricela* is pregnant but not happy about it. In telling her story, she uses several words and phrases that high school and young adult students will find of interest because they probably have friends or family members who have faced situations like Maricela's. Besides pregnant, these words include miracle of life, miscarry, delivery, abortion, adoption, and G.E.D. [Note that in some contexts, Maricela's story may not be an appropriate subject for classroom discussion.]

Fun Phrases.

Students often love to learn idioms, proverbs, or maxims. Although they can be fun to learn, they are not always easy to understand or use effectively. Furthermore, if they take study time and energy away from more important vocabulary, students may not benefit in the long run. Nevertheless, as you are teaching *Seedfolks*, you can look for opportunities to teach, explain, and use some popular proverbs, maxims, and common expressions with gardening themes such as these, which are listed in alphabetical order along with the author, if known.

- A rose is a rose is a rose (Gertrude Stein).
- All the flowers of all the tomorrows are in the seeds of today (Indian proverb).
- He can't see the forest through the trees.
- If you pass by the color purple in a field and don't notice it, God gets real pissed off (Alice Walker).
- It's a jungle out there.
- Plant a seed of hope.
- She isn't out of the woods yet.
- Take time to smell the roses.
- The butterfly is a flying flower, the flower a tethered butterfly (Ponce Denis Écouchard Lebrun).
- This dog is barking up the wrong tree.
- Where flowers bloom so does hope (Lady Bird Johnson).

Literary Devices: Simile and Metaphor.

Nearly all of the storytellers in *Seedfolks* use the literary devices known as *simile* (an indirect comparison using the words *like* or *as*) or *metaphor* (a direct comparison between two things). For example, Ana uses similes in each of the following:

- Her neighborhood is “*like* a cheap hotel—you stay until you’ve got enough money to leave.” (p. 6)
- “Gibb Street became the line between the blacks and the whites, *like* a border between countries.” (p. 6)
- “...everybody left, *like* rats.” (p. 7)
- “The next moment, she disappeared *like* a rabbit.” (p. 8)
- “My curiosity was *like* a fever inside me.” (p. 8)
- She put “those beans right back in the ground, as gently *as* sleeping babies.” (p. 10)

Ana also uses a metaphor when she says that she walked through “that awful jungle of junk” in the vacant lot. It is not really a jungle, but that word helps us see that she means there is a lot of junk and maybe it feels a bit scary or dangerous.

You may not want to point out all of the similes and metaphors in the book, and it is certainly not advisable to test language learners on the labels or meanings of these terms, but by showing examples, your students may begin to notice the device in their reading and gradually use them to add vivid detail to their own speaking and writing.



A community garden in Jacksonville, FL

Noticing and Using Sentence Patterns

As you prepare your *Seedfolks* lessons, you will undoubtedly notice sentence patterns that occur repeatedly or that you could use to help your students review previously studied patterns. By carefully wording your questions, handouts, tasks, or review sheets, you can help your students review the content of the story as well as important English sentence patterns. Examples:

(1) Based on Ana’s story:

Answer these *wh*-questions based on information in Ana’s story. Use your own words. Notice that the verb forms change from question to question. Add three new questions of your own.

1. Why doesn't Ana need a TV?
2. Who lived on Gibb Street when Ana was young?
3. When did many people move away from her neighborhood?
4. Where do the new people in the neighborhood come from?
5. What did Ana think Kim was burying?
6. How does Ana see so many things from her window?
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.

(2) Based on Amir's story:

Complete each of the following using information from Amir's story. Please use your own words.

10. When Amir grew eggplant, _____.
11. When someone dumped tires in the garden, _____.
12. When a woman got robbed, _____.
13. When Royce began spending more time on the garden, _____.
14. When a Mexican family started a barbecue, _____.



A community garden in Pittsburgh, PA

Telling and Retelling the Story

Introduction

Short stories and novels are frequently used in language arts classes to help students with the types of academic and critical thinking skills that are important for success in high school and college. For example, students may be asked to compare and contrast two characters in a novel, to write a plausible but alternative ending to a story, or to summarize the ideas in a text that they have read or heard. Language

learners derive several additional benefits from frequent retelling of the same story (orally or in writing). These include the opportunity to build fluency, focus on form, and reuse and recycle target vocabulary, all in the pleasurable and authentic context of telling a story. Below are some suggestions for using summary tasks with English language learners who are reading *Seedfolks*.

Focus on Fluency—Story Retelling

- **Impromptu Speaking.** Put the names of each storyteller whose chapters your students have read on slips of paper. Have students work in small groups to pull a slip and retell the story for that character using their notes if needed, but not the book. To avoid letting the activity drag, you can set a time limit appropriate to the fluency and proficiency of your students.
- **Practice Makes Perfect.** Have students line up in two parallel lines so that each is facing a classmate. Decide which line will be Speakers and designate the other as Listeners. Call out a character from the book and have the Speakers retell the story of that character for one minute while Listeners ask questions or encourage their partner with “Tell me more” or “Then what?” When time is up, switch roles and call out a new character from the story.
- **Real World Review.** When a new student joins the class or when another student returns from an absence, have a small group of classmates sit with him or her and retell the story. If they have pictures, summary sheets, vocabulary cards or other visual information, they should use it to help make the information clearer than voice alone would.
- **From Speaking to Writing.** Have students write a summary of a chapter that they have already practiced orally.



South Beach Community Garden, Miami, FL

Focus on Form

Present and Past.

English speakers use both simple present or past tense verb forms in summaries. Both forms are common:

(1) Simple present tense verbs:

Kim is a 9-year-old Vietnamese American. She plants some beans in a vacant lot in honor of her father...

(2) Past tense verbs:

Kim was a 9-year-old Vietnamese American. She planted some beans in a vacant lot in honor of her father...

Help students work with both forms.

- Have students alternate or try both forms in periodic oral retelling or written summary writing of the story or chapter.
- Give students a written summary in past tense and ask them to rewrite it in present.

Varieties of English.

Language learners frequently observe that the English in their textbooks does not resemble the English that they hear in their daily lives, and often they are correct. *Seedfolks* can help English teachers show students different registers and varieties of English and how they are used. The stories are told as though the narrator is speaking to us in a casual setting. Thus, there are fragments, contractions, slang expressions, and other features of informal, spoken English that do not usually appear in ESL and EFL textbooks where formal, written English is the usual model. Examples:

(1) From Informal to Formal

Choose a paragraph or two from one of the stories that your class has read recently and which displays examples of informal speaking style. Show students how to revise two or three sentences to make them complete and more formal, the way they should sound for the TOFEL exam, for example. Then have the students work with a partner to complete the passage. The long paragraph at the top of page 7 where Ana describes the Gibb Street neighborhood would work well for this exercise. [Note that there can be no single correct answer for a task such as this one. This, too, is an important point for language learners to realize—that there are multiple ways to express the same idea.

(2) Non-Native Speakers' Englishes

Sae Young is a non-native speaker of English. Her English displays several common features in language learner English including omission of past tense markers, copula *be*, and articles, as well as some word orders not found in Standard English. Thus, her story provides an excellent opportunity for ESL and EFL students to notice differences in non-native speakers' use of English.

Choose any paragraph from Sae Young's story and have students work in pairs or small groups to rewrite the paragraph in "proper" English. If possible display or share the finished work with



Ala Wai Community Garden, Honolulu, HI

other groups so that everyone can see how other teams addressed the same point. This activity could be repeated periodically using different passages from her story.

Integrating Skills

Chapter 14.

Have students plan, tell, and then write their own (invented) story about their connection to the Gibb Street Garden. If you have time to take these stories through the various phases of the writing process—revising, editing, and proofreading—they would be a great class collection to publish on your school’s webpage, a site for ESL/EFL teachers, or create a new *Seedfolks Volume 2*.

Familiar Story New Perspective.

Have students work alone or in small groups to develop the first person narrative (oral or written) for a character whose voice we do not hear in the book, for example Kim’s mother, Royce, or the Puerto Rican teenager.

Impromptu Speaking.

Make slips of paper each with a brief description of a scene that your students have already read. Some examples might be *Ana telephones Wendell*, *Curtis meets Royce*, or *Sam announces a contest*. Have students work in small groups to act out the scene using their words. Volunteer groups can perform for the class and see if the audience can correctly identify the scene. Finally, students could write the “script” for their scene.

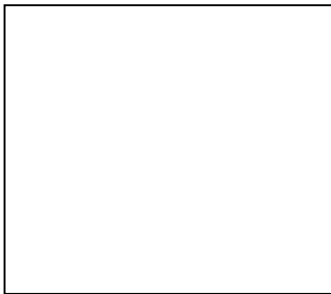


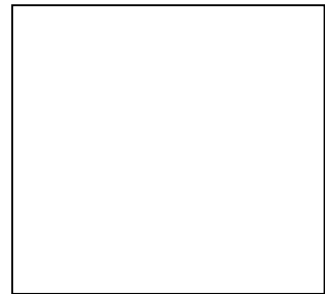
Parkland Gardens, Honolulu, HI

Illustrated Summaries.

Have students use a combination of words and images to draw and/or write summaries of the various chapters. Depending on their level, they may write only a word or two, a complete sentence, or more for each illustration they draw. The completed summary may resemble a cartoon strip or graphic novel.







Creating a Table of Contents

Introduction and Preparation

Books often begin with a table of contents. Teachers can explain to students that a table of content gives the name of each chapter and the page where it begins. The chapter titles in *Seedfolks* are very simple—just the narrator’s given name. After your students read several stories, however, they might get the characters’

names, such as Nora, Ana, and Leona confused. Creating a table of contents with a title and subtitle for each chapter can help them remember the characters, review the story, and practice distilling important information into a few words, an important academic skill.

- Introduce this activity after students have read two or three chapters.
- Write this information on the board:

Table of Contents			
Chapter	Title	Subtitle	Page #
1	Kim:	Honoring Her Father With Bean Seeds	1
2	Ana:	_____	5
3			

Procedure

1. Have students page through *Seedfolks* in order to answer these questions:
 - a. What is the title of the first chapter?
 - b. What is the title of the last chapter?
 - c. How many chapters are there altogether?
2. Draw students’ attention to the information on the board.
3. Work together to examine the example title + subtitle for Chapter 1.
4. Have them suggest parallel titles for Chapters 2 (Ana) and 3 (Wendell). Make clear that many answers are possible but their title should help them recall the story.
5. Give them time to copy the information and add their subtitles for Ana and Wendell.
6. After reading each subsequent chapter, have students add a new title and subtitle to their Table of Contents.
7. After every few chapters, have a review day in which students retell the story from the beginning using their Table of Contents as notes. Each time they retell the story, they will be recycling vocabulary and building fluency.

Other possibilities

1. Most titles are phrases, not complete sentences, but students may also enjoy writing a one-sentence summary like: *Kim is a Vietnamese American who honors her father by planting some seeds.*
2. Use this activity to discuss capital letter conventions in titles and in text.

Country Expert Information Gap

Introduction

Many countries are named in the story. Students can work individually or in small groups to choose a country, learn about it, and then teach their classmates. To do this successfully, they will need to pronounce new words, read large numbers, and explain new concepts, so be sure to give them practice and

rehearsal time. You can adapt the information, length, breadth, and content of this table to be appropriate for the age and level of your students. By adding additional columns to the right, students can learn from and teach other classmates as well.

		My country:	Classmate's country:
1	Official name		
2	Capital		
3	Largest city		
4	Area		
5	Population		
6	Neighbor countries		
7	Geographic regions		
8	Official language(s)		
9	Main religion		
10	Main industries		
11	National symbol(s)		
12	Interesting fact(s)		

Annotated Bibliography and Resources

- Ableman, M. (1993). *The garden of eaten: From the good earth*. New York, NY: Harry N. Abrams, Incorporated. This book contains beautiful pictures of gardens around the world suitable for ESL/EFL learners even at the beginning level. The pictures will help students understand *Seedfolks* and talk about gardening, raising food, the environment, and their own culture.
- Alexander, Carol. (2007). *Novel ties Seedfolks: A study guide*. New York, Learning Links, Incorporated. <http://greenmagnet217.wikispaces.com/file/view/Seedfolks+Novel+Ties+Study+Guide.pdf>. Learning Links has produced study guides for over 600 works of literature from picture books to the classics for teachers of all levels K-12. This guide contains over 20 pages of pre-reading, while reading, and post-reading activities for both heterogeneous and homogenous classes.
- Chada, S. (2011). *Seedfolks*. <http://www.kyrene.org/staff/schadaseedfolks/seedfolks%20launch%20page.html>. This website introduces the 13 characters of *Seedfolks*, each with 4-5 questions based on their stories along with supplemental activities such as drawing a map of students' neighborhoods or creating their own characters. This website can be helpful for both ESL/EFL learners and teachers. Students can use the website for independent study, and teachers can use it for developing post-reading activities related to *Seedfolks*.
- Chang, C. (Sep 19, 2008). A dream takes root. http://www.midweek.com/content/story/theweekend_coverstory/gary_kukui_maunakea_forth/. This is a feature story about Ma'ō Organic Farm on O'ahu, Hawai'i. The farm supports Hawaii's local food industry and brings together people of all ages and backgrounds. It could serve as a reading passage for advanced ESL/EFL learners because there is a lot of information in this article, and it will help students to have discussion in class.
- Eller, K. Gould, M. (2008). *Seedfolks: Stories that make a difference*. <http://www.uen.org/Lessonplan/preview.cgi?LPid=21754>. This site has eight 70-minute lessons meeting language arts standards for instruction in grades 6 and 7 in the state of Utah. There is probably enough material for a month of instruction in an ESL or EFL class. The focus is on critical thinking, reading, and writing skills and includes activities such as writing a first person narrative with plot and a particular point of view. The site has multiple clickable links leading to varied and contentful activities, resource materials, and related topics.
- Food for life partnership. (2011). <http://www.foodforlife.org.uk/>. Food for Life is a network of schools and communities in England. It seeks to introduce students to gardening and cooking activities that help children learn about food, farming, diet, health, economics, and their community. The website will help teachers looking for food and gardening activities. Although their programs are only in England, teachers in other countries can use the site for reference and resources.
- Go Green Stamp Products. (2011). <http://stampproducts.com/gogreen> These materials, available from the United States Postal Service, feature projects and activities using recycled paper. The materials include a set of four postcards with flower seeds embedded in paper of the cards. Instructions are written on the cards, so someone who receives a card can plant it and grow flowers. Writing messages, sending, and receiving these cards would be a great activity for ESL and EFL learners at any age. After they learn about gardening and the environment, they can use the cards to plant flowers.
- Guide to reading *Seedfolks*. (2011). http://www.teachervision.fen.com/tv/printables/harpercollins/seedfolks_rg. This is a short guide introducing skills, strategies, and post-reading activities for *Seedfolks*. It will help ESL/EFL learners who want to improve their reading skills and participate in art, drama, and science ac-

tivities related to the book. The discussion questions in this guide will help students better understand the reading process.

Kokua Hawaii Foundation. (2011). <http://kokuahawaii.org/> Kokua Hawaii Foundation is a non-profit organization supporting environmental education in the schools and communities of Hawaii. This website will help teachers looking for ideas about projects, events, and activities that they can join or adapt to bring environmental education into their classes.

Marnan, H. (2007). *Seedfolks* teacher guide. Bulverde, TX: Novel Units, Inc. ISBN: 978-1-56137-077-1. Also available from www.novelunits.com. This guide is intended for 7th or 8th grade teachers in a North American setting who wish to introduce students to the qualities of all good literature such as plot, theme, and (particularly) character study. The booklet also includes numerous post-reading tasks, ideas for assessment, and suggestions for extension projects and papers. Many activities would be suitable for ESL and EFL readers through high school and beyond.

Roig, S. (Nov 7, 2009). "A garden grows at shelter." *Honolulu Advertiser*. <http://the.honoluluadvertiser.com/article/2009/Nov/07/ln/hawaii911070321.html>. This article describes a vegetable gardening project for homeless children living at the Institute for Human Services in Kalihi, Honolulu. A former Aloha Airline pilot, Mr. Alan Joaquin, donated the garden hoping it would help children to learn how to care for plants and the importance of growing their own food.



A child with shovel, Faroe Islands postage stamp

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