Pick three students to perform aloud pages 4–7 from the book. Prior to a public performance, have students look through the pages and identify their character. Students can then use the scripts provided on this CD-ROM to practice their parts. Suggested props: lab coat and sunglasses for Max Axiom, climbing gear (rope, helmet) for Teresa.

**Scene One: Max Axiom is out in nature . . .**

**Narrator:** While trekking through a vast canyon, Super Scientist Max Axiom finds himself on an exploration into earth’s ecosystems.

**Max:** In some places, you can feel like the only thing on earth.

(_Speaking so it sounds like an echo_) Hello . . . Hello . . . Hello . . . Hello?

But no matter how far you travel, you’ll never be completely alone. The earth is filled with both living and nonliving things. The study of how these two parts of the environment interact is called ecology.

All living things are called organisms. And you don’t have to search far to find them. Fox and deer are organisms. Flowers and snakes are organisms. Even trees, birds, and bugs are organisms.

**Teresa:** And let’s not forget the living things we can’t easily see, Max.

**Max:** Hey, Teresa! What are you doing way up there?

**Teresa:** As an ecologist, I’m always looking for places to study organisms, including the tiniest worms, gnats, and bacteria. Why don’t you grab some gear and join me?

All organisms, big and small, are connected. Each depends upon other living things to survive.

**Max:** And not just when they’re dangling from a cliff! Right, Teresa?

**Teresa:** That’s right, Max! Many animals eat plants for energy to live. Some survive by eating other animals.

**Max:** The earth is also full of things that aren’t alive. Like sunlight, which gives plants energy to make food. Or soil, where plants anchor their roots and animals burrow. And the water we drink and the air we breathe, which are so important to our survival.

This community of living things working and interacting with their nonliving environment is called an ecosystem.

**Teresa:** And we’re all a part of it, Max.

**Max:** Thanks for the climb, but I still have a lot of ground to cover.

**Teresa:** And a lot more organisms to see.
Scene One: Max Axiom is out in nature . . .

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Max: In some places, you can feel like the only thing on earth.

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