

Common Words, Uncommon Meanings

This activity accompanies “One Life,” from *The Complete Poems of Paul Laurence Dunbar* by Paul Laurence Dunbar, record number 5057.

Activity Title: Common Words, Uncommon Meanings

Description: The students will explain the meanings of common words with uncommon meanings, as used in the poem.

Subject: Reading/Language Arts

Skill: Vocabulary

Behavioral Objective:

- The student will explain the meanings of common words used in an uncommon way in the poem.

Materials:

- “One Life” poem, available in audio and print form at <http://etc.usf.edu/lit2go/>
- Paper and pencil
- Vocabulary sheet (below)

Procedures:

Read the poem with the students, or have them read it on their own. Discuss with the students the main idea of the poem. Next, have the students work individually to complete the vocabulary sheet (below). Then, review the answers to the vocabulary sheet with the students in a group discussion format.

Uncommon definitions for the words as used in the poem:

Smart: to be the source of sharp, local, and usually superficial pain

Pregnant: full of meaning; highly significant; of great importance or potential



NAME _____

DATE _____

One Life Vocabulary

Directions: Write the common definition of the words below. Then, use the context clues of the poem to write a definition that fits how the word is used in the poem (include textual support as well). Finally, use a dictionary to confirm your context clues definition. Make sure the dictionary definition is the meaning used in the poem.

1. **Smart:**

Common definition: _____

Context clues definition: _____

Textual support for the context clues definition: _____

Dictionary definition: _____

2. **Pregnant:**

Common definition: _____

Context clues definition: _____

Textual support for the context clues definition: _____

Dictionary definition: _____

