

Author's Purpose

This activity accompanies “An Ante-Bellum Sermon,” from *The Complete Poems of Paul Laurence Dunbar* by Paul Laurence Dunbar, record number 4984.

Activity Title: Author's Purpose

Description: The students will use what they know about the time period in which this poem was written to determine a plausible purpose for the author writing this poem.

Subject: Reading/Language Arts

Skill: Literary Analysis

Behavioral Objective:

- The student will identify and explain the author's purpose for writing this poem.

Materials:

- “An Ante-Bellum Sermon” poem, available in audio and print form at <http://etc.usf.edu/lit2go/>
- Paper and pencils

Procedures:

Read the poem with the class, or have the students read it on their own. Discuss with the students the time period in which this poem was written. Also, talk about the way this poem was written, specifically the diction. Next, have the students work with a partner or small group to write an explanation for why Dunbar wrote this poem and what message he was trying to convey. Finally, have the students share their explanations with the rest of the class.

