

James Whitcomb Riley

This activity accompanies “James Whitcomb Riley,” from *The Complete Poems of Paul Laurence Dunbar* by Paul Laurence Dunbar, record number 5384.

Activity Title: James Whitcomb Riley

Description: The students will work with a small group to research who James Whitcomb Riley was, and then explain why the author may have written a poem about him.

Subject: Reading/Language Arts and Social Studies

Skill: Author’s Purpose and Research Skills

Behavioral Objective:

- The student will research who James Whitcomb Riley was, and then explain why the author may have written a poem about him.

Materials:

- “James Whitcomb Riley” poem, available in audio and print form at <http://etc.usf.edu/lit2go/>
- Paper and pencil
- Internet access to information about James Whitcomb Riley available at:
 - <http://www.americanpoems.com/poets/James-Whitcomb-Riley>
 - http://www.indianahistory.org/pop_hist/people/riley.html

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. Then, divide the students into small groups. Have each group use the website links listed above to research and take notes about who James Whitcomb Riley was. When the students have finished researching, have them write an explanation for why the author may have written a poem about Riley. Finally, have a whole class discussion reviewing the students’ answers.

