

Identifying Meaning

This activity accompanies “Whittier,” from *The Complete Poems of Paul Laurence Dunbar* by Paul Laurence Dunbar, record number 4990.

Activity Title: Identifying Meaning

Description: The students will work in small groups to research who Whittier was, and then participate in a classroom discussion.

Subject: Reading/Language Arts

Skill: Communication

Behavioral Objective:

- The student will research and organize information and demonstrate effective speaking skills and behaviors for an informal purpose.

Materials:

- “Whittier” 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. Explain to the students that Whittier was an influential American poet and abolitionist. Next, split the students into small groups and have them research who Whittier was and why Dunbar may have written a poem about him. Then, have the students put their desks in an open circle formation (so that the students can all see each other). Have each group share something interesting they found out about Whittier and continue the student-led discussion to include why Dunbar may have written the poem.

