

## Persuasive Essay

This activity accompanies “A Banjo Song,” from *The Complete Poems of Paul Laurence Dunbar* by Paul Laurence Dunbar, record number 4992.

**Activity Title:** Persuasive Writing

**Description:** The students will write an informational essay arguing for or against Dunbar’s suspicions about the marketability of his dialect poems.

**Subject:** Reading/Language Arts

**Skill:** Writing Applications

**Behavioral Objective:**

- The student will write a persuasive essay that speculates on the causes and effects of a situation.

**Materials:**

- “A Banjo Song” 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 fact that Dunbar’s dialect poems (using African American vernacular) were marketed and accepted more than his Standard English verse. Have the students write a persuasive essay that speculates on the cause and effect of the marketability of Dunbar’s dialect poems. Allow the students to research information, if necessary, about the time period in order to write their essay more accurately.

