

Changes in English

This activity accompanies “After While,” from *The Complete Poems of Paul Laurence Dunbar* by Paul Laurence Dunbar, record number 5025.

Activity Title: Changes in English

Description: The students will work with a partner to describe changes in the English language, based on their findings from the poem.

Subject: Reading/Language Arts

Skill: Literary Analysis

Behavioral Objective:

- The student will describe changes in the English language over time, and support these descriptions with examples from the poem.

Materials:

- “After While” poem, available in audio and print form at <http://etc.usf.edu/lit2go/>
- Paper and pencils
- Dictionary

Procedures:

Read the poem with the students, or have them read it on their own. Discuss with the students how the English language changes over time, and how meanings of words can change or develop new meanings. Next, have the students work with a partner, or small group to analyze the vocabulary found in the poem. While the students read over the poem, have them look for words that may possibly have alternative/less popular definitions, and have them look these words up in a dictionary. When they have finished, have the students share what they found in a class discussion. During the class discussion, ask the students to think about why language changes over time.

