



Yale-New Haven
Teachers Institute®

Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2015 Volume II: American Culture in the Long 20th Century

Code Switching: Celebrating Cultural Dialects in American Speech

Guide for Curriculum Unit 15.02.10

by Barbara A. Sasso

As teachers it is our responsibility to educate young people so they can build a better society, and that includes working towards changing biased and racist attitudes. To strive towards this end, this unit on dialect will examine bias in language, and how cultural stereotypes for many Americans, particularly African Americans, have been negatively portrayed. It will include discussions of language as power, discussions of stereotypical images from the minstrel era to rap music, and an examination of dialect in literature as a powerful and creative tool. The unit requires a synthesis paper and an original work that uses dialect creatively and celebrates the linguistic richness that many cultures have added to the English language. Works suggested include *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* , *Their Eyes Were Watching God* , *Under the Feet of Jesus* , and *The Sound and the Fury* .

(Recommended for English and AP Literature and Composition, grades 10-12)

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