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Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1978 Volume II: 20th Century Afro-American Culture

A Middle School Approach to Black Literature: An Introduction to Dunbar, Johnson, Hughes, and Angelou

Guide for Curriculum Unit 78.02.01
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This unit deals with thematic and stylistic parallels in the literature of four Afro-American writers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: Paul Laurence Dunbar, James Weldon Johnson, Langston Hughes, and Maya Angelou. The two major areas of comparison are the use of local dialect and the portrayal of the folk preacher as a source of power and coherence in the community he served. The narrative discusses these four writers of the Black Experience and briefly analyzes their work through examples included in the text. The lesson plans are introduced by an overview that explains the format and purpose of each. A biographical sketch of the four writers is followed by an activity based on their writings. A one-page bibliography completes the unit; it includes both primary and secondary material.

(Recommended for Middle School English classes; can be adapted for High School students in English I and II).

Key Words

General Afro-American Literature

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