James Edwin Campbell
19th Century African American Poet

Grades 3-5

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Overview
James Edwin Campbell was an African American Poet, who was born in Pomeroy, Ohio, in 1867. He penned his early verses while studying at Pomeroy High School (now known as Meigs High School) and published his first book of poetry, *Driftings & Gleanings*, in 1887. This book is written in Standard English, while his second collection, *Echoes from the Cabin and Elsewhere* (1895), employs the rich dialect of the African Americans in the Appalachian region in which he was raised.

Lesson Objectives *(Ohio English Language Standards Reference Numbers)*
By the end of these lessons, students will be able to:

- Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text. *RL: 3-5 #1*
- Determine the meaning of words or phrases as they are used in a text—distinguishing literal from non-literal, including metaphors and similes. *RL 3-5: #4*
- Refer to parts of stories, poems, when writing or speaking a text using such terms as stanza; also elements of poems such as verse, rhyme and meter. *RL 3-5: #5*
- Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension. *RF 3-5: #4*
- Conduct research projects that build knowledge about a topic. *W 3-5: #7*
- With guidance and support from adults produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose. *W 3-5: #4*
- Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions. *SL 3-5: #1*
- Determine the main idea and details of a text read aloud. *SL 3-5: #2*
- Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking reading or listening. Compare and contrast varieties of English such as dialect used in poems. *L 3-5: #3*
- Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple meaning words and phrases. *L 3-5: #4*
- Demonstrate understanding word relationship and nuances of word meanings. *L 3-5: #5*
**Student Activities – “Through October Fields” (condensed)**

Students will complete the following activities in sessions that can be divided up at the teacher’s discretion.

- Listen to the teacher read the poem “Through October Fields” (condensed).
- Participate in a group reading of the poem.
- Review the stanzas and discuss the context of the poem, using the “Discussion of ‘Through October Fields’” handout.
- Use various resources to complete the vocabulary worksheet.
- Create individual books with each stanza on a page and illustrated.
- Memorize and recite one stanza of the poem.
- Present as a group each memorized stanza.
- Enrichment exercise: memorize and recite selected stanzas or entire poem “Through October Fields” (condensed).

**Materials Needed – “Through October Fields” (condensed)**

- Copies of the poem, “Through October Fields” (condensed)
- Copies of the translation worksheet.
- Dictionary, thesaurus, field guides or encyclopedias to identify birds, plants and trees.
- Cardstock, hole punch, yarn, crayons or colored pencils and copy paper.

**Student Activities – “Mobile-Buck”**

Students will complete the following activities in sessions that can be divided up at the teacher’s discretion.

- Listen to the teacher read the poem “Mobile-Buck.”
- Participate in an oral reading of the poem.
• Watch a video of someone buck dancing as shown on http://youtube.com/cqvSLElhvQg (Thomas Maupin champion buck dancer).

• Listen to the teacher read a handout which gives a definition of buck dancing with links included in the article at http://ncpedia.org (NOTE: Type in “buck dancing” in the search box at top of page.)

• Work in groups of two or three to fill out the dialect translation worksheet, and look at the translated version of the poem.

• Discuss the translation of the poem to clarify any questions in meaning.

• Consider comparisons to clogging, Irish dancing or even tap dancing.

• Enrichment activity: have students write their own rhyming poem following the rhyme scheme in “Mobile-Buck” (ABABCC).

• Enrichment activity: have students try the dance or volunteer to demonstrate any dances they may know for the class.

Materials Needed - “Mobile-Buck”
✓ Copies of the poem “Mobile-Buck.”

✓ Copies of translation of the poem

✓ Link to youtube video showing the dance at http://youtube.com/cqvSLElhvQg (Thomas Maupin champion buck dancer).

✓ Computer to show buck-dancing video.

✓ Definition of buck dancing sheet for the teacher at http://ncpedia.org.

Teacher Preparations
• Read over the Teacher’s Edition Biography of James Edwin Campbell to become familiar with his story.

• Read Recognizing Dialect in Creative Writings by Michelle O’Malley, PhD

• Read Learning about Poetry by Christina Veladota, PhD
· This lesson plan is divided into two sessions; however, you can combine the sessions for a longer class period or omit some activities for shorter sessions.

Procedures

Standard English Poem: “Through October Fields” (condensed)

[Note: Teachers need to break the following activities into sessions that fit their schedules and time constraints, and can pick good stopping points that best serve them.]

• Explain to the students that they will be learning about African American poet James Edwin Campbell and looking at two of his poems. Pass out the James Edwin Campbell biography found in the Student Masters section. Read the biography to the students or have a student read it out loud while the others follow along. Discuss the poet’s life with the children – he was born in Pomeroy, OH, that he published two books of poetry, and was also a teacher, principal, and president of a college.

• Pass out the “Through October Fields” Vocabulary Worksheet and copy of the poem to each student.

• Introduce “Through October Fields” (condensed) to the students by reading it aloud.

• Place students into groups of no more than three. Have students read the poem quietly in their group and work together to define words on the “Through October Fields” Vocabulary Worksheet. Tell them to add words at the bottom of the list that are unfamiliar as well. Next, tell them to try and define by context as many words as possible before turning to the dictionary to define the remainder of the words.

• Explain to the students what is meant by figurative language. Ask them to think of examples of commonly used figures of speech. The students might use clichéd words such as “stubborn as a mule.” Encourage them to come up with original ones that have not become cliché.

• Next give each group a stanza to carefully analyze, especially looking for examples of figurative language or descriptive speech. Have them take notes on each stanza to report to the class in an impromptu speaking assignment. One “speaker” can be “elected” for each group.
• Next pass out Discussion of “Through October Fields” (Condensed), go through a stanza-by-stanza explanation of the poem. Point out examples of simile, metaphor, or personification. For example, the simile “thread like path” could be used, or the wheat looking like “warriors grey” could be used as an example of personification.

• Students can create a book with cardstock and several pieces of lose leaf paper. They should hand write each stanza of the poem on the left side of the paper and illustrate it on the right. This can be divided up into groups to speed the process along, thus creating one book per group if desired. Have available field guides of birds and plants for them to consult in making their illustrations.

• Display the books on a bulletin board or have the students give a reading for another class, as part of a school assembly program, or at a parents’ meeting.

Dialect Poem: “Mobile-Buck”

• Review the biography of James Edwin Campbell with the students and remind them he was African American and lived in the Appalachian Mountains of Ohio.

• Tell the students the poem they have already read, “Through October Fields” is written in Standard English. Next you will listen to a poem that is written in Black English.

• Explain to the students that Campbell heard different ways of talking when he was growing up—very proper English in the school he attended, along with Appalachian Mountain dialect and Black English among his friends and family.

• Show and discuss the video of the Buck dance http://youtube.com/cqvSLElhvQg (Thomas Maupin champion buck dancer). Many students might have family members who dance this way, could have seen it at folk festivals, or are on clogging or Irish dance teams that do similar steps.

• Pass out the copy of the poem “Mobile-Buck” and the copy of the poem translated into Standard English,

• Introduce “Mobile-Buck” to the students by reading it aloud. Go over the translation of the poem into Standard English

• Pass out the dialect worksheet. Divide students into groups of two or three and have them work on the dialect worksheet.
• Handwrite the poem and illustrate for a bulletin board display.

**Enrichment:** Have students analyze the poem’s rhyme scheme by assigning a letter for every time the rhyming sound changes. (A, is first rhyme. B is second end sound, etc.) Have students write a poem with and ABABCC rhyme scheme. You can either have students write the poem as a class, in groups, or by themselves.

**Evaluations**

Students will complete with 70% accuracy the following quiz:

**James Edwin Campbell Quiz – Teacher’s Edition**

1. James Edwin Campbell was from what city and state?
   ______Pomeroy____________, ______Ohio________

2. What river runs through Campbell’s hometown? ___Ohio River____

3. James Edwin Campbell wrote in two different styles:
   ___Standard_________English and _____Black_______English


5. What color is an ageratum? ______blue____________________

6. In “Through October Fields,” Campbell refers to wheat being “like warriors grey with years.” Is this a *simile* or metaphor? Circle the answer.


8. In the poem, “Mobile-Buck,” the words “Hoop tee doo” is an expression of which emotion-- joy or anger? Circle the answer.

9. What is the man doing in the poem “Mobile-Buck?” sleeping, dancing or working? Circle the answer.
10. Translate the following line from Black English to Standard English on
the space provided:

“See, my lub, I dawnc ter you.”

_____See my love I dance to you.____________________

“Through October Fields” Vocabulary Worksheet
Teacher’s Edition

Look up the words using a dictionary, the encyclopedia, field guides, and
the Internet to find information about the following.

Personification – to give human qualities to inanimate objects and ideas
Metaphor – a comparison of two things that does not use words like or as
Simile - comparison of two things using the words like or as
Quail – a small woodland bird that; sometimes called the Bob White
Covies – groups of quail
Grouse – a large woodland bird; it makes a drumming sound with its wings
Peal – a loud repeated sound
Flicker – a type of woodpecker, sometimes called a yellowhammer
Shrill – high pitched
Defiance – open resistance, bold disobedience
Golden Rod – a type of yellow wildflower that blooms in late summer
Plume – a long, soft feather or arrangement of feathers
Tawny – of an orange-brown or yellowish-brown color
Ageratum – a type of blue wildflower that blooms in late summer
Wold – an old way of saying an un-forested, meadow area
Wheat – a grain that is grown for bread
Bristling – with sharp points like a porcupine’s quills
Ranks – lines of soldiers
Elms – a type of tree
Lil’put – a place in the book Gulliver’s Travels where people are very small
Sans - without
Rudders – the part of a boat used to steer it
Ports – a town or city with a harbor for boats
Quaintly – old-fashioned
Cornshock – a way of bundling corn that has been cut from the field
Wigwams – Indian villages that usually contain tee-pees
“Mobile-Buck” Dialect Worksheet – Teacher’s Edition

Is “Mobile Buck” written in Black English Dialect or Standard English?

_________ Black English Dialect _________________

Unless you were born in Edward Campbell’s time, you would probably find this poem difficult to read. Why?

It uses words and phrases that are not commonly used today

Translate each line from dialect to Standard English and answer questions on the lines provided. A few clues are provided.

O, come erlong, come erlong
What does the word “erlong” mean in this line?

______________________________ along ___________

Wut’s de use er hol’in’ back;

What’s ________________ the use of ______ holding ____________ back;

What do you think Campbell means by this line?

___ Is asking the dancer to dance the best he can and not be shy __________________________

O, hit it strong, er hit it strong
What does Campbell mean by “hit it strong?” What does he ask the dancer to “hit?”

_____hit his feet against the floor ____________________

Mek de ol’ flo’ ben’ an’ crack. Make the old floor bend and crack._____________________

What does Campbell mean by this line?

___ To dance so hard and energetically that the boards of the floor will bend and maybe even crack __________________________

O, hoop tee doo, uh, hoop tee doo! Why does Campbell use those words? What emotion is he trying to show?

_______ Wants to show happiness and having fun dancing _______

Can you think of an equivalent expression of “hoop tee doo” in Standard English? (hint: What do you shout when you’re excited or when you express enthusiasm?)

____________________ yippie, hooray, whoo hoo, ________________
What emotions do the following words show? Do they have a similar effect as hoop de doo?

Ho, boy! Ho, boy! Well done, meh lady!
The dancer is proud of himself and trying to impress a lady who might might be watching

Translate the following from Black English to Standard English.

Dat's____that's____de_the __ way ter_to___ knock it froo____through__________________.

Slide de_____the_____lef'____left_______ foot right erlong____along__________.

See, my lub_____love_______________. I
dawnce_____dawnce_______________ ter_to___ you.

Fas'ah ___Faster______________ wid____with__________
dat_____that_________Pattin'_____patting______________, Sam!

Dar's_____There's________________________ music in dis___this____
lef'__left________Heel's song.

Mis'ah__mister__________ right foot, doan'___don't______ you
sham ____shame_____

Straight erlong____along____________ I dawnce____dawnce__________
ter__to_______ you.

Slide erlong, slide erlong,
Mek____make__________ dat____that__________ right foot hit it strong.

Hoop tee doo, O, hoop tee doo, See, my lub____love__________, I
dawnce____dance____________ ter_to___ you
James Edwin Campbell Biography – Teacher’s Edition

James Edwin Campbell, African American poet and author, was born in the Ohio River town of Pomeroy, Ohio in 1867—just two years after the end of the civil war.

Campbell’s father worked in the salt works, a place where salt was boiled off and collected from an ancient, underground body of ocean water. The salt was then shipped for use to cities along the Ohio River. When too many similar mines opened, there was too much competition, and the Pomeroy mines shut down.

Pomeroy’s coal mines and salt works were mostly run by wealthy businessmen from New England who founded the town in the early 1800s. Children of these wealthy families were usually sent off to boarding schools, where they would study while living far away from their families. However, the wealthy families of Pomeroy created a school called the Pomeroy Academy and hired teachers from the best schools in the country.

Campbell and his siblings attended a school that was segregated, where black children went to school separately from white children. The school was called the Kerr’s Run Colored School; however, it only went up to the eighth grade. However, one of Campbell’s classmates asked the school board of Pomeroy Academy if black children could continue their educations past the eighth grade at another school where white children attended. The school officials agreed, and African American students were allowed to continue their education. This occurred before the laws stated that schools could not be segregated, something called desegregation.

The Kerr’s Run school children became some of the best students in the high school. The courses were tough, but James Campbell worked very hard at his studies. Just after graduation, his first book of poetry, Driftings & Gleanings, was published. He later went on to become a teacher and began teaching at African American schools in Ohio and West Virginia.

Later, Campbell became well known for his writing and was hired to edit two African American newspapers in West Virginia, The Pioneer and the West Virginia Enterprise. He began publishing essays and poetry around the country.

In 1891, Campbell was hired as the first president of West Virginia Colored Institute (WVCI), a college for African Americans in West Virginia. The school is now West Virginia State University, and Campbell is credited with founding it. In 1894 he received an honorary Ph.B. from the mostly black school of Shaw University in Raleigh, North Carolina.

Campbell eventually left WVCI for Chicago in 1894 to pursue his writing full time. In 1895, he published a second book of poetry, Echoes from the Cabin and Elsewhere. This book was written mostly in a style of writing called “Black Dialect,” which up until that time had been used by white poets to mimic and poke fun at slaves on Southern Plantations. Campbell wrote dialect poems by
basing them on the language he grew up hearing in Pomeroy, Ohio. Some of his poems have traces of the speech still heard in the Appalachian Mountains while others he wrote used the spoken dialect of blacks at that time.

In December, 1895, Campbell came to visit his family in Pomeroy for the holidays and to read poetry from his new book to the community. Unfortunately, Campbell became sick and died on January 27, 1896, at the young age of 28, in his parents’ home. It is thought that he died from a deadly disease called typhoid.

Campbell’s death at a young age was tragic to his family and community. He was one of the first black poets to use Black Dialect. Today, copies of his book are found in rare book collections and are very valuable.

Recognizing Dialect in Creative Writings
Michelle O'Malley, PhD

[Note to teachers: When discussing the following dialect content, consider having the students look at one of the Campbell poems so they can learn to identify these concepts based on an actual poem. Not all of these concepts will be appropriate for all grade levels, but the information might be useful for your better understanding of the dialect use in general.]

The content of this curriculum challenges both teachers and students to view Appalachia from a fresh perspective and to acknowledge it as a creative, dynamic force. James Edwin Campbell’s story and his body of work, while first demonstrating that the region’s creative forces have been at work - sometimes in obscurity - for over a century, perfectly illustrate the themes of mountains, music, history, language and ethnicity. Campbell’s work lays claim to his unique place in African-American/Appalachian regional history.

More specifically, Campbell not only produces unique poems and stories but also does so from a very unique place - a unique geographic place, a unique personal place and an important linguistic/cultural place. In the late 19th century, black American writers who wrote in dialect primarily represented the speech of the southern black experience: the Gullah of the Sea Isles and the Plantation English of the deeper south where African languages, English, Spanish and others contributed to a distinct pidgin that soon developed into a Creole specific to the southern plantation culture.

Campbell’s work stands out, not only for its quality and content focus, but also for its language form. While readers can identify aspects of early forms of “black English”, one also finds significant, and quite early, use of Appalachian English – written in an ‘eye-dialect’ so that readers are invited to read the works out loud, thereby experiencing the melodic components of Campbell’s compositions while still reveling in the beauty, the pain, the lyrics of the J.E. Campbell body of work.
In practice, we can often pick out the primary vowel features of Appalachian English, monophthongization of /ay/, fronting of /u/ and /o/, and vowel reduction in unstressed syllables, for example. But other examples of vowel changes as a result of rhotic influence are written to represent a very “Black English” sound – specifically, the Black English of the plantation south...

Additionally, the use of dialect in historical writing serves to engage the reader on a more personal level by offering closer access to the speakers and their thoughts. And by reading the pieces aloud, consumers are able to participate in the events depicted!

Finally, the value of recognizing/using/teaching dialect through poetry and short stories teaches our students to appreciate the language forms of their communities and families. These activities are also good vehicles for teachers who choose to introduce the idea of ‘code switching’ – the practice, employed by many, of transitioning from one language variety/dialect to another depending upon the context or situation. Students can be made to feel more comfortable with their primary dialect in speaking situations and, at the same time, continue to be motivated to use a more formal variety of the language for school projects and/or student-teacher interactions.

**Important Terminology:**

**Dialect** – dialect includes unique vocabulary and phrases as well as pronunciation patterns and grammatical forms that diverge from Standard American English (SAE).

**Code switching** – this is the process of switching from one dialect/language to another.

**Pronunciation/"accent"** – this is one component of a dialect. “Accent” refers to how we pronounce certain vowels or consonants or where we place word stress, for example.

**Syntax/grammar** – this refers to any “rule” for phrase or sentence construction as well as the use of subject-verb agreement or irregular verb forms in ‘regular’ environments...

**Appalachian** – a reference to anything from the vast, 13-state region (from Mississippi to NY) that is defined as Appalachian

**Black English/AAVE** – African American Vernacular English or Black English is a specific dialect of English and one that is represented in Campbell’s poems

**Gullah** – this language form developed in South Carolina and Georgia during the era of slavery in the US.

**Phonology** – diphthong, monophthong, rhotic, deletions, stopping, insertions, vowel mergers, tensing, raising...
Plantation English – mixture of the speech of the plantation owners, their overseers, and the slaves brought to them from Africa. Even before the Africans landed on the east coast of North America, they were already using a pidgin that developed on the western coast of Africa as a result of the English-speaking slave traders and the Wolof, Hausa, Bambara, etc. speakers of the interior living in close quarters for extended periods of time...

A Sense of Place – a theme that permeates Campbell’s body of work is, perhaps, BEST illustrated by the language forms he chooses to employ: a mixture of Standard English, Appalachian English and Black English/AAVE.

(Dialect)Features of Black English: These items are frequently observed in the speech of today's speakers of Black English as well as many Southern English varieties – including some Appalachians. These may not all be present in Campbell’s poems, but many will be observed.

Phonology
Final consonant deletions – For example, ‘cold’ goes to ‘col’ or ‘pond’ goes to ‘pon’
“stopping” – sounds that require continuous airflow are stopped. For example, ‘they’ goes to ‘dey’ or ‘this’ goes to ‘dis’
Final “s” deletions – For example, ’50 cents’ goes to ’50 cent’ or ‘3 girls’ goes to ‘3 girl’

Vocabulary
“Aint” – does NOT mean “is not” .... Instead, examine the following:
  “He ain’t leave no keys.” – He didn’t leave any keys.
  “I ain’t got no cards.” - I don’t have any cards

Syntax/grammar
Habitual “be”: the verb ‘to be’ is used without inflection in the present, habitual tense. For example, ‘He be tall’ or “She be happy’.
Uninflected “to be” in continuous constructions: Present continuous tense uses ‘be’ plus the -ing ending on the main verb. For example, ‘He be runnin” or ‘she be sleepin’ for statements about what’s happening now.
Inversions – “What time it is?”, “How you can do that?”

(Dialect) Features of Appalachian English: This is just a ‘taster’ of some of the most common features of Appalachian English today. Some of these are evidenced in the Campbell poems, and others are available for additional study/review by students living among and using these forms regularly.
Phonology

r-full: the letter ‘r’ is produced in all environments
r-insertions: sometimes an ‘r’ is inserted where it is not represented in spelling. For example: ‘wash’ goes to ‘warsh’

monophthongizations on diphthongs: like in “light”, “like”, “might”, “mine”…these words employ a diphthong when pronounced by most speakers in the Midwestern region. In many rural Appalachian varieties of English, those diphthongs become monophthongs – so ‘light’ goes to ‘lat’ and ‘might’ goes to ‘mat’ and so on...

weak syllable deletions: In many rural dialects, and in rapid speech most anywhere, the weakest (fastest and most quiet in speech) syllable in a multi-syllable word is often deleted. For example, ‘remember’ goes to ‘member’, ‘suppose’ goes to ‘spose’, and ‘confessed’ goes to ‘fessed

consonant deletions: They->’ey and them-> ‘em
tire/fire as “tar/far”: Common vowel + ‘r’ production in Appalachian varieties

Vocabulary

Positive “anymore”
Yet = still
LOTS of Scots and German nouns and verbs

Syntax

a-prefixing: a-huntin’ and a-fishin’
double modals: might could

“The car needs washed.” Vs “The car needs washing.”

s-adding on the verb when 3rd person subject is plural:
    The dogs walks.... The people goes...

Learning about Poetry

By Christina Veladota, PhD

Some Poetry Basics

[Note to teachers: When presenting the following poetic terms, you should have the students look at one of the Campbell poems so they can learn to identify these concepts based on an actual poem. Not all of these concepts will be appropriate for all grade levels.]

• When reading a poem, read it as if it is written in prose. If a line is enjambment, then let your eye move to the next line without stopping. If you encounter an end-stopped line, then pause as you would with prose.
• The word enjambment refers to a line of poetry that does not end with a comma, period, or any other punctuation.
• An end-stop refers to a line of poetry that ends with a punctuation mark.
• **Line break** refers to where the poet chooses to end a line of a poem and move to the next line.

• A **stanza** refers to the unit of lines in a section of a poem. Think of it as the equivalent of a paragraph. Some poems are broken into several stanzas, while some are made up of only one stanza. Stanzas come in many lengths. Some poems use one stanza length throughout; others use a variety of lengths. Uniform stanza length tends to make a poem appear more formal than a poem that uses a variety of lengths.

• **Tone** refers to the attitude of the speaker in a poem. Does the speaker seem happy? Sad? Reflective? Angry?

• **Syntax** refers to the word order in a poem. Many times, the word order in a poem will be the same as you encounter it in speech and in prose. Other times, the word order will be turned around, which can enhance / change the meaning. Used with **enjambment**, unexpected **syntax** can surprise the reader.

• **Rhyme scheme** refers to the organization of rhyme in a poem. There are a lot of rhyming patterns out there. Some examples are abba, aabb, abab. These describe possible **quatrain** rhyme schemes. Depending on the length of the stanza, the scheme could be different. Not all poems use rhyme!

• **Imagery** refers to the pictures the poet “paints” in words. What do you “see” in the poem? Sometimes the use of **similes** and **metaphors** help create these pictures. A good image helps you access one (or all) of your five senses and helps convey the **tone** of the poem.

**What is a Simile?**

The basic definition of a simile is that it’s a comparison of two things using the word *like* or *as*. Remind students that when using a simile in a poem, the poet can conjure up images that are often surprising to the reader.

For example: *The moon is like a silver coin in the sky.*

**What is a Metaphor?**

A metaphor is a comparison of two things that does not use the words *like* or *as*. Remind students that metaphors can create more powerful images than similes. Metaphors suggest that one thing *is* the other thing and not merely similar to it.

For example: *The moon is a silver coin in the sky.*
What is Personification?

Personification is a figure of speech that gives human traits to an inanimate object (a thing), an animal, or an idea.

For example: *The leaves danced in the wind.*

What is an Antonym?

An antonym is a word that has the opposite meaning to another word.

Examples: *day / night  true / false  dark / light*

What is a Synonym?

A synonym is a word that has the same (or similar) meaning to another word.

Example (same meaning): *street and avenue*
Example (similar meaning): *stop and yield*

What is a Homonym?

A homonym is a word that is spelled and pronounced the same way, but has different meanings. (For our purposes, we will not address homophones or homographs.)

Example: *bear* is an animal or can mean to carry something

What is Alliteration?

The word alliteration refers to the repetition of consonant sounds.

For example: “Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.”

Tips for Reading a Poem:

- Read the poem once through without worrying about understanding it. If possible, read it aloud.
- Read it a second time. Circle or underline repeated words, phrases, or ideas.
- Circle or underline related images such as parts of the body (hands, eyes, feet, hair, etc.), or different types of weather (wind, rain, sunshine, snow, etc.).
• Think about why these things or ideas are repeated, or used often.
• What is the basic action of the poem? The basic action of the poem is similar to the plot of a story. What is happening in the poem? When considering this, don’t worry about finding a meaning yet.
• Who is the speaker of the poem? The speaker in a poem is equivalent to the narrator in a short story or novel; it’s the voice or character that’s telling the story.
• Identify similes in the poem.
• Identify metaphors in the poem.
• What is the tone of this poem? Is it happy, sad, fearful, or is there some other kind of emotion conveyed through the language and imagery? Identify a line or two that illustrates the tone.
• Does this poem rhyme? If so, what is the rhyme scheme?
• What about syntax? The word syntax refers to word order and sentence structure. Some poets employ syntax that is different from ordinary speech. Do you see examples of this in the poem?
• Does this poem have a set structure to it? Are the stanzas uniform all the same length? If so, why do you think the poet chose this structure? If not, why not?
• Consider what you think this poem is about.

**Additional Resources**

1. Wikipedia Entry (contains a few inaccuracies such as cause of Campbell’s death. He died of typhoid, which often causes pneumonia-like symptoms.)

2. Poetry Foundation
   [http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/james-edwin-campbell]

3. Article about acquisition of Campbell’s first book, *Driftings & Gleanings* at Ohio University Libraries. Both of Campbell’s books are in the Archives and Special Collections Department of Alden Library at Ohio University.
   [http://www.ohio.edu/news/months/jan97/161.html]

4. Excerpts from Campbell’s dialect book, *Echoes From the Cabin & Elsewhere*
   [http://allpoetry.com/James-Edwin-Campbell]

5. *African American Poetry of the Nineteenth Century*. Page 306
   [https://books.google.com/books?id=fjf8pS2U+oC&pg=PA306&lpg=PA306&dq=poetry.org+James+Edwin+Campbell&source=bl&ots=k96dRO8jMk&sig=KjRr0BnEGlqlBLNuUnJjR468LlQQ&hl=en&sa=X&ei=-]
James Edwin Campbell Obituary

The Pomeroy Tribune-Telegraph, January 29, 1896

J. EDWIN CAMPBELL DEAD!

HE HAS SUNG HIS LAST SONG ON EARTH.

HIS SOUL TAKES ITS FLIGHT AT THE TURN OF THE NIGHT.

James Edwin Campbell, dialect poet and story writer is dead. His soul took its flight from earth at midnight Sunday night. He was conscious to the end and died as a weary child going to sleep.

He came to the home of his parents Mr. and Mrs. James Campbell of the First Ward from Chicago about a month ago on a holiday vacation not feeling well. Some two weeks ago he was taken with grip and a racking pain in the head. A week ago Monday he manifested symptoms of pneumonia and took to his bed. Typhoid symptoms and peritonitis followed. Thursday his condition became alarming and his wife, who is a teacher in Wilberforce College, was summoned by wire to his bedside. He grew gradually worse from day to day and died in collapse.

Deceased was born in Pomeroy, 28 years ago the 28th of last September. He graduated from the Pomeroy High School with the class of 1884 and afterward taught in various parts of the country. On August 5, 1891 he was married to Miss Mary E (sic) Champ, a refined and educated lady, of New Athens, Ohio. She is a graduate of Marietta College, class of '87, and is a teacher of considerable note. She is a daughter of J. A. (sic) Champ connected for many years with the summer (sic) school at Parkersburg.

While a teacher of marked ability, Campbell achieved more fame in his dialect writings. The readers of this paper are familiar with the character of his work, it having had the pleasure of publishing many of his productions. His dialect poetry
has attracted widespread popularity. He went to Chicago last summer and made a decided hit in the western literary metropolis with his melodious jingles. Mr. Campbell has written two books of poems, a collection of his best work. One, "Echoes from the Cabin and Elsewhere," he published since going to Chicago, and while employed on the literary staff of the Chicago Times-Herald. In the past few months he had been called upon to read from his works in various places in Illinois, Indiana and Ohio. His last public appearance was in the Baptist Church in this city on the evening of January 2, when his audience was carried away with his recitations. At that time he appeared to have a long and successful life before him. He had reached a position in his profession where his reputation as a writer made his literary wares of ready sale at good prices. He was better known and more highly appreciated abroad than at home. While his writings were mostly humorous, pathetic and true to life, it required a person of some literary ability to get the real meat out of his works, particularly his dialect work. His first work "Driftings & Gleanings" was published in 1887 at Charleston, W. VA. In his introduction to this work Mr. Campbell says: “The poems or perhaps it is better to say verses, have been written just when the mood was upon me. Some were composed after I had retired and would ring in my ears like Mark Twain’s

"‘Punch brothers, punch with care,
Punch in the presence of the passenjare,’”

until I would be obliged to get up and write them down. Some of them were written when I was a schoolboy, attending the Pomeroy High School and were read before the dear old P.H.S.L.S. (Peace Its ashes!) Some were written while I was ‘teaching the young idea how to shoot,’ and ‘pouring the fresh instruction o’er the mind’ at Rutland, Ohio. Others still have been written since I have been the editor of the West Virginia Enterprise and have been published in that journal.”

He dedicated this work to his mother and it is but necessary to quote from this dedicatory notice to show the real character of the man, viz:

In presenting this little volume to the public, as is customary, I must dedicate it to some one, but whom? Who will consider it an honor to be so remembered? No one? Yes, there is one.

To this one then, I dedicate it.
To one whose every heart beat has been as loyal and as true to me as the pointing of the needle to the pole, who has with loving care and anxious solicitude watched over my every step, as from infancy to boyhood, and from boyhood to the threshold of manhood, I have tottered, then walked the “flinty slopes” and (can’t read a few words here) awards of this life: to one who has thought no sacrifice too great, no denial too severe, for the pleasure, comfort, and advantage of her boy….whose every thought has been for my welfare, and whose patience I have oftentimes severely tried with my boyish headstrong ways, and whose kind acts I have perhaps
too often accepted as “written in hand:” to that dearest, holiest, safest, best blessing ever spared to a boy, I dedicate this book:

“Love droops, friends may fail,
And the leaves of friendship fall.
But the tender love of a mother
Outlives them all.”

The funeral takes place from the Wesleyan Church at Kerr’s Run at 10 a.m. Thursday. The funeral discourse to be delivered by Rev. Lawrence, of Parkersburg, assisted by Rev. Hill of the Baptist Church of this city. The remains will be buried on the hill above Minersville. We know no more fitting close to this article than the epilogue written himself at the close of his first book, viz:

‘Tis done, my songs are sung,
I close the book and finally turn away.
What tho’ no roses at my feet are flung,
Nor plaudits wild greet loud my uncouth lay
I sang not for praise alone.

What tho’ the critiques scornfully sneer
And metre, thought and rhyme with harsh words assail,
And with the wise look of a prophetic sneer,
Predict that such unpolished rhymes will fail
I sang not for their praise.

But from the heart each song arose
Like the spring which bubbled from the mountain side
Then involuntarily a small brooklet downward flows
Then onward until lo! A mighty river sweeps on in pride.
So involuntarily I sang.

I sang because the heary o’er flowed
And songs, to me sweet, unbid would rise,
And the Muse’s face before me ever glowed
Like a bright winged bird, which, alluring ever onward flies.
And so I sang.

“O Mystic Land of Some Day,
Behold our sails spread wide,
As toward the azure mountains
‘Neath softest skies we glide;
‘Land ho!’ the lookout’s calling.
Down oars and sails are falling
Forever, just ahead!”
Acknowledgements
These lesson plans are the result of a group of scholars, public school teachers, and historians desiring to bring James Edwin Campbell back to life in K-12 classrooms during Black History Month. Long overshadowed by African-American poet, Paul Laurence Dunbar, Campbell predates Dunbar in dialect writing as well as addressing topics pertaining to racial issues of his day.

The following people gave freely of their time, energy and resources to research, write and ultimately provide K-12 students an inspiring introduction to a forgotten poet who has earned his rightful place in African American literature and history.

Jane Ann Fuller, MFA Poetry, Associate Professor of English, Hocking College, and Poet
Miriam Intrator, MSLS, PhD, Special Collections Librarian, Ohio University Libraries
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Jean Mikail, MA Creative Writing, MLS, Former College Instructor of English & Literature, and Poet
Michelle O’Malley, PhD Speech Language Science, CCC-SLP, Assistant Professor of Linguistics, Ohio University
Lisa Roback, MS Education, Intervention Specialist, Meigs High School
Liz Shaw, Meigs County Historical Society Trustee, Folk Musician and Documentary Producer
Christina Veladota, PhD Creative Writing, Poetry, Associate Professor of English Composition & Literature, Washington State Community College, and Poet

Student Masters begin on the next page.
James Edwin Campbell
An African American Poet

James Edwin Campbell was an African American poet who was born in Pomeroy, Ohio, many years ago in 1867. He grew up in the Appalachian Mountains next to the Ohio River and started writing poetry when he was a high school student.

James Edwin was a very good student and was allowed to go to a school that was only open to white children at the time. Many of his African American friends were also allowed in this school, and they worked very hard to prove they were just as smart as the other students. Many of them went on to write books, teach school, and work in government.

When he finished high school, James Edwin taught school and wrote a book of poetry. He became the principal of a school, and he continued to write poetry. He then became the president of a college, and he kept writing poetry. Many of his poems were printed in magazines and newspapers. These poems were written in Standard English, and that is the language most often used today. You learn Standard English in your reading classes at school.

One day James Edwin decided he wanted to write a book of poetry in another language style. He used a way of speaking called Black English to write these poems. It was the way his family and friends spoke when he was growing up, and it was important to him to write their words down.

When we read poems by James Edwin Campbell today, we might read some in Standard English and some in Black English because he loved to write both ways. Black History Month is a good time to talk about James Edwin Campbell, but his poetry is fun to read any time of year!
"Through October Fields" (condensed version)
By James Edwin Campbell
The startled quail in covies whir
From 'neath your feet as on you stray
Along the narrow thread-like path,
This cool October day.

The grouse’s booming drum of bass
Peals from the hollow on your right,
Till 'larumed by your near approach
He wheels in sudden flight.

And on the trunk of yon dead tree
The “flicker” beats his fierce tattoo,
Then hurls back from his wave-like flight
Defiance shrill to you.

On every side the golden rod’s
Long, graceful plumes of tawny gold
And ageratum’s purple bloom –
The banners of the wold.

The stubble of the June-reaped wheat
Stands up in bristling ranks of spears
Its gold is covered now with frost,
Like warriors grey with years.

There in the stream beneath the elms
The leaves, like ships of Lil’put fair,
Drift down, sans rudders and sans sails
To ports that lie nowhere.

See in the field beyond the stream,
Pitched wide o’er all the bottom land,
An Indian village quaintly shown,
The cornshock wigwams stand.

Now, you are “near to nature’s heart,”
You lie upon her tawny breast;
You feel her warm breath on your cheek
As in her arms you rest.
Discussion of “Through October Fields”
By James Edwin Campbell (condensed version)

The startled quail in covies whir
From 'neath your feet as on you stray
Along the narrow thread-like path,
This cool October day.

Covies are flocks of quail and other such birds. It is usually spelled coveys, but in Campbell's time period it was often spelled covies. Quail spend a lot of time on the ground in meadows and are easily startled, flying up in a large group – he thought their wings made a whirring sound. You are on a path that winds through the fields and next to the woods where you will hear and see many things. He says the path is thread-like, meaning it is small and weaves in and out among the fields you are walking. How would you illustrate this stanza of the poem?

The grouse’s booming drum of bass
Peals from the hollow on your right,
Till 'larumed by your near approach
He wheels in sudden flight.

Grouse are birds that also spend a lot of time on the ground, and they beat their wings very hard against the air and their chests to make a drumming sound. Campbell says it sounds like a bass drum. The word peals means a loud repeated sound; sometimes it is used to describe bells, thunder, or even laughter. A hollow is a place in the woods that narrows and has mountains or hills on both sides, making the area feel very narrow and almost like a tunnel sometimes. Another way to say it is holler and many older people use that word instead. The word 'larumed is an old way of writing alarmed. The grouse was alarmed, and suddenly flies away, just like the covey of quail. The word wheels doesn't mean the grouse is driving a car! It means the bird changes direction to fly away from you. Can you find a picture of a grouse on the internet or in a book and draw one to illustrate the poem?

And on the trunk of yon dead tree
The “flicker” beats his fierce tattoo,
Then hurls back from his wave-like flight
Defiance shrill to you.

A flicker is a bird that is also called a yellow hammer or gold winged woodpecker. People in Southern Ohio call it a “flicker” because it makes a cry that sounds like “Flicker, flicker, flicker.” Since it is a type of woodpecker it will like to hammer out holes on dead trees looking for insects, and Campbell says yon dead tree as a way of saying, that dead tree over yonder. People used to say the word yonder a lot more than they do today. The flicker is not putting a tattoo on the tree, but is beating a rapid rhythm on the tree. That is sometimes referred to as a tattoo. Drums are said to play tattoos. The flicker flies in a wave like pattern up and down in the air - almost like he is on a roller coaster. He is calling out to you in defiance as he flies off
– in other words he is not afraid of you and might be rather annoyed that you have invaded his space on this cool October day! There are pictures of flickers in bird-watching books. You might check one out at the library and draw a flicker. Even better, you might watch for one to fly by and take its picture, but you had better be quick because they fly really fast!

On every side the golden rod’s
Long, graceful plumes of tawny gold
And ageratum’s purple bloom –
   The banners of the wold.

Golden rod is a tall, gold wildflower that blooms in the fall, mostly in meadows. Maybe your path has been near the edge of the woods and you are now heading towards more grassy areas where golden rod blooms. Also purple ageratum is another wildflower that likes to bloom in meadows and is usually found with golden rod. Campbell says they are the banners of the wold. Banners are types of colorful flags that often have meaning – like school colors for instance. The word wold means an un-forested, rolling area, which describes the fields and meadows in Meigs County. So banners of the wold might be saying the wold is its own separate place from the woods having its own colors, and these wildflowers are the wold’s banners to let you know you are in a new territory. Wildflower books have photos of golden rod and ageratum. Can you see them on the roadsides in the fall? How would you illustrate this stanza of the poem?

The stubble of June-reaped wheat
   Stands up in bristling ranks of spears,
   Its gold is covered now with frost,
   Like warriors grey with years.

When wheat was cut in the month of June it left a stubble in the field. This stubble is the bottom of the stalk that the reap-hook missed and it can be very uncomfortable to walk on! Campbell said it was like bristling spears. To get an idea of what bristling means – a porcupine’s quills are sometimes called bristles, so ouch! He said the stubble was in ranks, which describes how it was in rows. The wheat is planted in rows, so when it is cut, the stubble is also left in rows. Ranks often refer to how soldiers are lined up, too. The stubble has frost on it which is white, and he says it reminds him of warriors (soldiers) with their spears who have now grown old and are turning grey. Can you imagine a way to illustrate this stanza that shows frosty wheat stubble looking like spears?

There in the stream beneath the elms,
   The leaves, like ships of Lil’put, fair,
   Drift down, sans rudders and sans sails
   To ports that lie nowhere.

Your walk has brought you to a grove of elm trees that hangs over a little stream. The elm leaves are beginning to fall and Campbell says they remind him of little ships like those found in the story Gulliver’s Travels when he went to Lilliput and
met the tiny little people there. The leaves would be just about the right size for them to use as boats! He says the leaves are *sans rudders* and *sans sails*. *Sans* is a Latin word that means *without* so they are just drifting aimlessly down the stream and are going *to ports that lie nowhere*. In other words, they have no destination; they are just along for the ride and are not going to a port to dock, like real boats do. You might be able to make a collage of fall leaves glued to a blue stream that you have drawn.

Now you are looking at a field on past the stream and Campbell says you are seeing an old Indian village. But are you really? Actually you are gazing at *cornshocks*, which are made by tying corncstalks together in a tepee to use for animal feed in the winter. *Wigwams* refer to a village of tepees. This would be a fun picture to draw! You could divide the poster in half and draw cornshocks and on the other half draw an Indian village with tepees to show the similarity of the two!

You have finished your walk through the October fields and Campbell says that you have had a real experience with Mother Nature, that you have been near to her heart, and that she has embraced you. He thinks it is a good place to be and you might just rest and enjoy the season and beauty all around you! What do you think a picture of someone resting in the arms of Mother Nature might look like? They would probably have their eyes closed and a smile on their face. They might even be lying in the meadow, basking in the sunshine, thinking about all the things they have seen and heard on this wonderful walk.
“Through October Fields” Vocabulary Worksheet

Look up the words using a dictionary, the encyclopedia, field guides, and the Internet to find information about the following.

Personification
Metaphor
Simile
Quail
Covies
Grouse
Peal
Flicker
Shrill
Defiance
Golden Rod
Plume
Tawny
Ageratum
Wold
Wheat
Bristling
Ranks
Elms
Lil’put
Sans
Rudders
Ports
Quaintly
Cornshock
Wigmams
“Mobile-Buck”
by James Edwin Campbell

O, come erlong, come erlong,
Wut’s de use er hol’in’ back
O, hit it strong, er hit it strong,
Mek de ol’ flo’ ben’ an’ crack.
O, hoop tee doo, uh, hoop tee doo!
Dat’s de way ter knock it froo.
  Right erlong, right erlong,
  Slide de lef foot right erlong.
  Hoop tee doo, O, hoop tee doo,
See, my lub, I dawnce ter you.
  Ho, boy! Ho, boy!
Well done, meh lady!

O, slide erlong, slide erlong—
  Fas’ah wid dat pattin’, Sam!
Dar’s music in dis lef’ heel’s song.
  Mis’ah right foot, doan’ you sham!
O, hoop tee doo, oh, hoop tee doo!
Straight erlong I dawnce ter you.
  Slide erlong, slide erlong,
  Mek dat right foot hit it strong.
  Hoop tee doo, O, hoop tee doo,
See, my lub, I dawnce ter you.
  Ho, boy! Ho, boy!
Well done, meh lady!
“Mobile-Buck” Dialect Worksheet

Is “Mobile Buck” written in Black English Dialect or Standard English?  
__________________________________________________________________

Unless you were born in James Edwin Campbell’s time, you would probably find this poem difficult to read. Why?  
__________________________________________________________________  
__________________________________________________________________

Translate each line from dialect to Standard English and answer questions on the lines provided. A few clues are provided.

*O, come erlong, come erlong*

What does the word “erlong” mean in this line?  
__________________________________________________________________

*Wut's de use er hol'in' back;*

What do you think Campbell means by this line?  
__________________________________________________________________  
__________________________________________________________________

*O, hit it strong, er hit it strong*

What does Campbell mean by “hit it strong?” What does he ask the dancer to “hit?”  
__________________________________________________________________  
__________________________________________________________________

*Mek de ol' flo' ben' an' crack.*

What does Campbell mean by this line?  
__________________________________________________________________  
__________________________________________________________________

*O, hoop tee doo, uh, hoop tee doo!*

Why does Campbell use those words? What emotions is he trying to show?  
__________________________________________________________________  
__________________________________________________________________
Can you think of an equivalent expression of “hoop tee doo” in Standard English? (hint: What do you shout when you’re excited or when you express enthusiasm?)

What emotions do the following words convey? Do they have a similar effect as *hoop de doo*?

*Ho, boy! Ho, boy! Well done, meh lady!*

Translate the following from Black English to Standard English.

 Dat’s_________________________ de____ way ter________________________
 knock it froo________________________.

 Slide de_________lef’_____________ foot right erlong__________.

 See, my lub____________________, I dawnce____________________
ter______ you.

 Fas’ah_______________ wid_____________ dat____________________
Pattin’____________________, Sam!

 Dar’s_________________________ music in dis_________ lef’_________
 Heel’s song,

 Mis’ah_______________ right foot, doan’__________ you sham
 __________!

 Straight erlong_______________ I dawnce____________________
ter_______ you.

 Slide erlong, slide erlong, Mek____________________ dat____________________
 right foot hit it strong.

 Hoop tee doo, O, hoop tee doo,
 See, my lub____________________, I dawnce____________________ ter____ you.
Black English Translation - “Mobile-Buck”
Oh, come along, come along
What’s the use in holding back;
Oh, hit it strong, hit it strong,
Make the old floor bend and crack.
Oh, hoop tee doo, uh, hoop tee doo!
That’s the way to knock it through.
Right along, right along.
Slide the left foot right along,
Hoop tee doo, oh, hoop tee doo,
See, my love, I dance to you.
Oh, boy! Ho, boy!
Well done, my lady!

Oh, slide along, slide along—
Faster with that patting, Sam!
There’s music in this left heel’s song,
Mister right foot, don’t you shame!
O, hoop tee doo, oh, hoop tee doo!
Straight along I dance to you.
Slide along, slide along.
Make that right foot hit it strong.
James Edwin Campbell Quiz

1. James Edwin Campbell was from what city and state?
   ___________________ , ___________________

2. What river runs through Campbell’s hometown? ________________

3. James Edwin Campbell wrote in two different styles:
   ___________________ English and ___________________ English


5. What color is an ageratum? _______________________

6. In “Through October Fields,” Campbell refers to wheat being “like warriors grey with years.” Is this a simile or metaphor? Circle the answer.


8. In the poem, “Mobile-Buck,” the words “Hoop tee doo” is an expression of which emotion-- joy or anger? Circle the answer.

9. What is the man doing in the poem “Mobile-Buck?” sleeping, dancing or working? Circle the answer.

10. Translate the following line from Black English to Standard English on the space provided:
    “See, my lub, I dawnce ter you.”
    ____________________________________________________________________