James Edwin Campbell
19th Century African American Poet

Grades 9-12

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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 Academy (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 & Elsewhere (1895), employs the rich dialect of the African Americans in the Appalachian region in which he was raised.

In this lesson, students will read, interpret, and write poems inspired by Campbell’s works. Students will examine his use of dialect and explore possible interpretations through close readings and short essays. By the end of the lesson, they will be able to explore the historical context of his poems, as well as discover interpretations of and their personal connections to Campbell’s poetry.

Lesson Objectives (Ohio English Language Standards Reference Numbers)
By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:
• Answer questions about poet James Edwin Campbell. RL 9-12: #8, #10
• Define and apply poetic terms. L 9-12: #1, #4, #5
• Understand the concept of dialect. L 9-12: #3
• Discuss, defend, and write possible interpretations of two poems, one in Standard English and one in Black English. RL 9-12: #1, #2, #3, #4, #10; W 9-12: #3; SL 9-12: #1, #3, #4; L 9-12: #4, #5

Student Activities
The students will complete the following activities:
• Read a brief biography of James Edwin Campbell
• Do close readings of Campbell’s poetry through group discussion and written responses
• Keep a notebook for brainstorming and personal responses
• Write personal responses to Campbell’s poetry
• Write brief interpretations of Campbell’s poetry
• Locate information through research (using books, handouts, or the Internet)
• Write original poetry based on Campbell’s poems (optional)
Materials Needed
• Copies of the student handouts for each student, found in the Student Masters section.
• Access to the Internet to find some of the resources listed in the Additional Resources section for students to read on their own. Some contain photographs of Campbell.

Teacher Preparations
• Copy all student materials
• Read all resource materials for more information about Campbell, understanding dialect, understanding poetry, and additional resources
• Determine how you would like to divide the four Units into class periods. Some of the activities can be done in class or assigned as homework.

Procedures
Unit 1: Learning about James Campbell
• Explain to the students they will be learning about African American poet, James Edwin Campbell, and look at two of his poems. Ask them to read his biography.
• When the students have finished reading, ask the following questions of the class at large. Allow them to refer to the biography for answers.
1. What year was James Campbell born and when did he die? How old was he when he died? 1867-1896, died of typhoid age 28
2. What war had just ended when Campbell was born? Civil War
3. Is it likely that some of Campbell’s relatives had been slaves? Yes
4. Where was he born and what body of water is near his hometown? Pomeroy, Ohio, next to the Ohio River
5. What mountains are near his hometown? Appalachian Mountains
6. Where did Campbell’s father work? Salt works
7. Who can describe how salt was made in Pomeroy? Salt water extracted from wells that tapped an underground ocean was boiled, leaving salt crystals behind.
8. What other industry was in Pomeroy at the time of Campbell? Coal mining
9. What was the name of the first school in Pomeroy in the early 1800’s? Pomeroy Academy
10. What was the next name of Pomeroy Academy? Pomeroy High School
11. What is the name of the school today? Do you think the school today is in the same building as in the early 1800’s? Meigs Local High School. It is not located in the same school building that Campbell attended.
12. What school did Campbell and other black children attend before they were high school age? Kerr’s Run Colored School
13. How many grades did that school have? 8
14. What does the word “segregation” mean in this biography? White children and black children were not allowed to go to school together.
15. Did the people of Pomeroy Academy have to let Campbell and other African American high school students into the segregated school? No, there was no law requiring it yet.
16. After he graduated from high school Campbell published his first book of poems. What is the name of that book and when was it published? Driftings & Gleanings (1887)
17. What else did Campbell do immediately after graduation? Passed the teachers exam and began teaching school.
18. What other writing work did Campbell do? Edited two newspapers and wrote for magazines and newspapers around the country.
19. What school appointed Campbell as its first president and where is it located? What is it called today? West Virginia Colored Institute, which is West Virginia State University today near Charleston, WV.
20. Why did Campbell leave West Virginia Colored Institute and where did he go? He wanted to become a full time writer, and he move to Chicago.
21. What was the name of his second book and when was it published? Echoes from the Cabin & Elsewhere (1895).
22. What was the difference between Campbell’s first book and his second book? The first book was in Literary English and the second book was in Black English, or dialect.

Enrichment
- Discuss how Campbell’s attendance in a white, privileged school before laws were in place to teach African Americans higher grades set him on course for success as a writer and educator. Have the students imagine what their lives would be like if they were only allowed to attend school until 8th grade and ask them to contribute to a discussion on the topic.

- Read Campbell’s obituary in class and discuss how the style of writing in the newspapers of the time differs from today. Students might be interested in learning more about typhoid, a disease that is rarely found in the US anymore, and treatable with antibiotics. Consult the Additional Resources links to find more information about Campbell and search for his photograph online.

- Discuss how Campbell might have written much more poetry and become as famous, or even more so, than the well-known African-American poet, Paul Laurence Dunbar. Point out that Campbell predates Dunbar and is thought by some experts to have influenced him.
Unit 2: Learning about Poetry

[Note to teachers: When presenting the Learning about Poetry handout, have students look at “Compensation” so they can learn to identify these concepts in an actual poem.]

• Distribute Learning about Poetry and “Compensation” to the students. Tell them to bring these handouts back to class for the next few days.
• As a class, read the section Poetic Terms. Look for examples of them in “Compensation,” a poem they will study closer in Unit 3. Write on the chalkboard any terms that are identified, and have students write them in their notebooks for future reference.
• Next go over similes, metaphors, personification, antonyms, homonyms, synonyms, and alliteration. Look for examples in “Compensation” and write any that are found on the chalkboard; have students write them in their notebooks for future reference.
• Finally, tell the students to read over the tips, and that they will be using them at the next session to better understand Campbell’s poems.

Learning about Poetry – Teacher’s Edition

Poetic Terms

• When reading a poem, read it as if it is written in prose. If a line is enjambled, 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 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 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.)

**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 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.

Unit 3: A Closer Look - “Compensation”

• Have students read the poem aloud. You can select a different student for each stanza, or you can ask one student to read the entire poem. Read the poem aloud more than once.

• Ask the students to open their notebooks and freewrite about this poem. Freewriting involves jotting down ideas without worrying about spelling, grammar, or punctuation. They should write about how the poem makes them feel, and what they think it’s about and why. They should also write about anything that seems unclear or confusing about the poem. There’s no right or wrong answer. Give them about 3 – 5 minutes for this task.

• Break the students into pairs or small groups. Have them share their freewriting with the members of their group. Ask them to consult the handout from the last session, Learning about Poetry. Give them the following questions, (written on poem copy), to consider together:

1. What is the basic action of this poem? In other words, what’s happening here? What’s the plot?
2. Are any ideas, words, or images repeated in this poem? If so, what? Why do you think the poet repeats these elements?
3. Who is the speaker of this poem? To whom is this person speaking?
4. What is the tone of this poem? Identify one or two lines from the poem that illustrate this tone.
5. What is the rhyme scheme of the poem? What is the structure of the poem? In other words, are there stanzas of certain lengths?
6. What do you think this poem is about? [Please remind the students that poets leave clues in the poem about what it is about. Though their personal reflections are valid, the students should try not to interpret the poem based solely on their own experiences. They should use the clues left by the poet to determine the poem’s meaning.]

[Note to Teachers: If you’re pressed for time, you can break the class into several groups and assign one or two questions per group. Make sure each group understands that they will be the experts about this question, so they should be well prepared to discuss their answers with the rest of the class.]
When the groups complete the questions, open the discussion to the entire class, so each group can share their findings. The following are the kinds of answers you should hope to hear from the students:

1. The basic action of the poem is of a poor man watching a rich man ride by in his carriage. A woman whom the poor man loves is with the rich man (she is, in fact, his bride).

2. The line “Ride on, young lord, ride on!” is repeated at the end of each stanza. The poet does this for a couple of reasons. 1) The repetition of the line works well with the rhyme and rhythm of the poem. 2) The line is important, because the speaker is being sarcastic. He is basically telling the rich man that he is oblivious to the fact that the woman beside him is not in love with him, so he should just “ride on” and continue living a life based on a lie. The word title is also repeated. This is to show the difference between the rich man and the speaker’s father. The rich man has some sort of title from high society, but the speaker values more what his father (who has no title) has left him, which are moral and ethical values, as well as a love for nature.

3. The speaker of this poem is a poor man. His father has lived as a tenant on the rich man’s father’s land. The speaker is speaking to a rich man, who has married the woman he loves.

4. The tone of this poem seems to be one of pride. Though the speaker uses the word proud as a negative descriptor for the rich man, the speaker is proud of the ideals his father has passed down to him, and he is also proud to know the woman’s love belongs to him and not to the rich man.

5. The rhyme scheme of the poem is ababcccd. The structure is made of stanzas with 7 lines, and the last line does not have a “partner” line that rhymes with it. Line 7 is also the same line in each stanza to give emphasis on what the speaker is thinking to himself, but might like to say out loud.

6. By the time you get to this question, the students could have already addressed the meaning of the poem, since the other questions lead them down this path. Go through the poem stanza by stanza and get them to discuss exactly what the speaker is trying to say in each. Ultimately, the speaker believes that the pleasures of the natural world are more valuable than anything money can buy. The rich man essentially purchased his wife in exchange for her father’s land. The speaker feels the knowledge that this woman loves him is also more valuable than wealth.

Homework, or class assignment: Students write a 1 – 2-page response to this poem (or shorter if during class time). It should include at least one paragraph in which they reflect upon the meaning of this poem (based on the class discussion). They are then free to respond as they wish. Is there anything in their own lives that they can relate to this poem? How does this poem make them feel?
**Enrichment:** Have students write an imitation poem based on “Compensation.” Urge them to use a similar rhyme scheme, repetition, and stanza length, but also encourage them to write about something personal. The content of the poem should be original.

**Unit 4: A Closer Look - “Winter-Tired”**

[Note to teachers: “Winter-Tired” is one of Campbell’s dialect poems. You should refer to the dialect information in this packet to better understand the language of the poem. Reading this poem aloud a few times is helpful with this particular poem, because the more the students hear it, the clearer the meaning will become.]

- Distribute copies of “Winter-Tired.” Have students read the poem aloud. You can select a different student for each stanza, or you can ask one student to read the entire poem. Read the poem aloud more than once. Explain that the poem is written in Black English. Go over dialect words with the class and see if they can offer the definitions. Write them on the board this way: wus = was, settin’ = setting, winder = window, etc.

- Ask the students to open their notebooks and freewrite about this poem. Encourage them to write about the dialect words in the poem – are they easier to understand when read silently or out loud; do they know anyone who might speak this way? Do they use some of the dialect words themselves at home or with friends? They should write about how the poem makes them feel, and what they think it’s about and why. They should also write about anything that seems unclear or confusing about the poem. There are no right or wrong answers. Give them about 3 – 5 minutes for this task.

- Break the students into pairs or small groups. Have them share their freewriting with the members of their group. Ask them to consult the handout from the last session, *Learning about Poetry*. Give them the following questions, (written on poem copy), to consider together:

  1. What is the basic action of this poem? In other words, what’s happening here? What’s the plot?
  2. Are any ideas, words, or images repeated in this poem? If so, what? Why do you think the poet repeats these elements?
  3. Who is the speaker of this poem? To whom is this person speaking?
  4. What is the tone of this poem? Identify one or two lines from the poem that illustrate this tone.
  5. What is the rhyme scheme of the poem? What is the structure of the poem? In other words, are there stanzas of certain lengths?
6. What do you think this poem is about? [Please remind the students that poets leave clues in the poem about what it is about. Though their personal reflections are valid, the students should try not to interpret the poem based solely on their own experiences. They should use the clues left by the poet to determine the poem’s meaning.]

The following are the kinds of answers you should see reflected in their responses to the poems:

1. The basic action of the poem shows the speaker looking out the window at the snow that covers the Earth. The speaker is ready for winter to be over and for spring to arrive.

2. The pronoun I is repeated a lot to indicate the speaker feels strongly about something on a personal level. The speaker uses synonyms such as longin’, and want to indicate his desire for the season to change. We also can see many descriptions of nature and weather (both winter weather and spring weather). When providing these descriptions, the speaker uses personification (i.e. “The Airth is shrouded like a corpse,” “The bullfrog swear its spring,” “The hillsides put their mourning off,” and “O, I want to hear that tongue-tied brook / Go singin’ on its way, / Ashoutin’ as it runs along: ‘The robins ’ve come to stay!’” [Ask your students if they can identify other areas of repetition.]

3. The speaker is a person who is tired of the winter weather. It is unclear if the speaker is a man or a woman. [If your students feel that the speaker is, in fact, a man, that’s okay.] The speaker makes reference to religion “Like a soul that’s washed from sin,” so he or she is also probably religious.

4. The tone of the poem seems solemn and tired at first. The title (“Winter-Tired”) is a good example of this. The speaker also says, “I am tired of all this sollum white.” The end of the poem seems full of excited anticipation for the approach of spring.

5. The rhyme scheme for this poem is a bit unique. The first stanza is abcadeef, and the other two stanzas are abcbdefe.

6. By the time you get to this question, the students could have already addressed the meaning of the poem, since the other questions lead them down this path. Go through the poem stanza by stanza and get them to discuss exactly what the speaker is trying to say in each. This poem could simply be about someone who longs for spring, but since we’ve also determined that this speaker is religious, the changing of the seasons is also a metaphor for the Holy Spirit. Spring is when the Earth comes alive and we experience the rebirth of nature (flowers bloom, trees blossom and their leaves return). This time of year is also when people celebrate Easter, which is, according to the Bible, when Jesus came back from the dead. [Of course, students who are not religious may not choose to read the poem in this way, and that’s okay. Remind them that any interpretation is fine as long as they use clues from the poem, and not information outside of it.]
Homework, or class assignment: Students write a 1 – 2-page response to this poem (or shorter if during class time). It should include at least one paragraph in which they reflect upon the meaning of this poem (based on the class discussion). They are then free to respond as they wish. Is there anything in their own lives that they can relate to this poem? How does this poem make them feel?

Evaluation - Students will complete the following quiz with 70% accuracy

James Edwin Campbell Quiz – Teacher’s Edition
1. Where was James Edwin Campbell born? Pomeroy, Ohio
2. What is the mountain range near his home? Appalachians
3. What river flows through his hometown? Ohio River
4. What war had just ended when he was born? Civil War
5. What are the two writing styles he used in his poetry? Standard English, Black English Dialect
6. Besides writing, what else did James Edwin Campbell do for a career? Teacher
7. What is the name of the university where he was the first president? West Virginia State University. (West Virginia Colored Institute also acceptable.)
8. How did he die? typhoid
10. How many books did he write? 2
11. True or False? The word *enjambment* refers to a line of poetry that does not end with a comma, period, or any other punctuation. True
12. Circle the correct answer: A stanza is: the word order in a poem or a unit of lines in a section of a poem or the attitude of the speaker in a poem
13. Is this phrase a simile or metaphor? *The river is a blue ribbon on the brown-haired earth.*
14. Is the speaker in “Compensation” powerful and wealthy? No
15. Who is the speaker calling a *hot-house orchid* in *Compensation*? The woman he is in love with, but who is now betrothed to the rich young lord.

16. Is the *tongueless brook* in “Winter Tired” an example of alliteration or personification? **Personification.**

17. What are the Standard English words for the following Appalachian and Black English words?

- **winder** = window
- **Airth** = Earth
- **sollum** = solemn
- **singin’** = singing
Resource Materials

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 the 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, monopthong, 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’
monopthongizations 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 monopthongs – 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 mulit-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...

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 the 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=fjfq8pS2UxkC&pg=PA306&lpg=PA306&dq=poetry.org+James+Edwin+Campbell&source=bl&ots=k96dRO8jMk&sig=KjRr0BnEGLq1BLNuuNjR468LlqQ&hl=en&sa=X&ei=-pPJvNNIt4GxBPzTgqAF&ved=0CEEQ6AEwBg#v=onepage&q=poetry.org%20James%20Edwin%20Campbell&f=false

6. Poem Hunter
http://www.poemhunter.com/james-edwin-campbell/
7. The historical marker for Campbell, once installed in Pomeroy, is currently in disrepair due to an accident, and has been removed until it can be re-welded. http://www.remarkableohio.org/HistoricalMarker.aspx?historicalMarkerId=106031

8. West Virginia State University’s page on past presidents: http://www.wvstateu.edu/Administration/Office-of-the-President/History-and-Past-Presidents.aspx
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 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 and 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
solitude 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
Paula Linscott, MS Reading, Retired Reading Specialist K-12
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 following page.
James Edwin Campbell
Appalachian African-American Poet

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. Located in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains, Pomeroy was known for its coal mining and salt industry that employed thousands of Welsh, Germans, and African Americans at the time.

Campbell’s father worked in the salt works. These operations refined salt water collected from deep wells that tapped an ancient underground body of ocean water. After the salt was collected from boiling off the water, it was shipped to cities along the Ohio River, until competition from salt works in other states drove the Pomeroy industry out of business.

Pomeroy’s coal mines and salt works were predominantly established by wealthy businessmen from New England who founded the town in the early 1800’s. Rather than sending their children off to boarding schools, these affluent families established the Pomeroy Academy and hired teachers from the best schools in the country, including Harvard University. The Academy was eventually renamed Pomeroy High School.

Campbell and his siblings attended a school that was segregated from white children called Kerr’s Run Colored School; however, the school only went to the eighth grade. One of Campbell’s classmates is credited with appealing to the school board of Pomeroy High School to allow black children to continue their education. The school officials agreed, and African American students were allowed in the school many years before laws required they even be given a high school education, much less in a desegregated school!

The students of Kerr’s Run Colored School took advantage of this rare opportunity and became some of the best students in the high school. The courses were difficult, and Campbell worked very hard at his studies. A few years after graduation his first book of poetry, Driftings & Gleanings, was published. He also successfully passed the teacher’s exam and began teaching at African American schools in Ohio and West Virginia.

Campbell became well known for his writing and was hired to edit two African American newspapers in West Virginia. At the same time his poetry and essays were published throughout the country in literary magazines and in newspapers. He also gave speeches about equal rights for African Americans and was an activist for improved laws and opportunities for his race. These accomplishments occurred before he was 25 years of age!

In 1891, Campbell was hired as the first president of West Virginia Colored Institute (WVCI), a school of higher education originally established for African Americans near Charleston, West Virginia. The school is now West Virginia State University, and Campbell is credited with establishing a solid foundation for the school’s future growth. In 1894 he received an honorary Ph.B
(equivalent to a bachelor’s degree) from the historically black university, Shaw University, in Raleigh, North Carolina.

Campbell left WVCI in 1894 for Chicago to pursue writing full time. In 1895 he published his second book of poetry, *Echoes from the Cabin & Elsewhere*. This book was primarily written in Black English dialect, something that up until that time had only been done by white poets mimicking, and sometimes poking fun, at slaves on Southern plantations. Campbell wrote dialect poems based on the language he grew up hearing in Pomeroy. Some of his poems have traces of the speech still heard in the Appalachian Mountains while others make use of the Black English spoken by African Americans at the time.

In December 1895, Campbell came to visit his family in Pomeroy for the holidays and to give readings throughout the region from his new book of poetry. After a few weeks, he became very ill and died January 27, 1896, at the age of 28 at his parents’ home. It is thought he contracted typhoid from the recurring epidemics of the disease in Chicago where he was living at the time.

Campbell’s untimely death was a tragic loss to his family as well as the literary community. He is credited as a pioneer among black poets for use of dialect and predates the better-known black poet, Paul Laurence Dunbar. Campbell’s works are also of special interest to those who study the language of those from the Appalachian Mountains as well as Black English.

**Two Styles of Writing**

James Edwin Campbell wrote poetry in two language styles. His first book, *Driftings and Gleanings*, is written entirely in Standard English. It is obvious from these poems that Campbell took his high school education very seriously, and achieved an excellent command of the English language! Some of the words and phrases he used might be unfamiliar to you, but they can be found in a dictionary and can often be “decoded” by how they are used within the poem.

*Echoes from the Cabin and Elsewhere* is written several years later and consists mostly of poems written in the Black English dialect of that time period. In a letter written by Campbell to the English poet, Thomas Hutchinson, Campbell asks the poet’s opinion of publishing a book of poems in dialect. White writers wrote the only poetry published in Black English at this time; these writers lacked a true understanding of the language form, and sometimes even mocked African Americans. Campbell’s desire, according to this letter, was to write in a way that honored his ancestors and kept alive a unique part of their culture – their manner of speech. Just as in his Standard English writings, some of the words and phrases in Campbell’s dialect poetry might be unfamiliar to you. Many times they can be “decoded” by reading the poem several times to better understand the context or meaning of the poem as a whole.
Learning about Poetry
Some Poetry Basics

1. When reading a poem, read it as if it is written in prose. If a line is enjambed, 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.

2. The word enjambment refers to a line of poetry that does not end with a comma, period, or any other punctuation.

3. An end-stop refers to a line of poetry that ends with a punctuation mark.

4. Line break refers to where the poet chooses to end a line of a poem and move to the next line.

5. 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.

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

7. 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.

8. 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!

9. 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.)
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.
Compensation

By James Edwin Campbell

O RICH young lord, thou ridest by
With looks of high disdain;
It chafes me not thy title high,
Thy blood of oldest strain.
The lady riding at thy side
Is but in name thy promised bride,
Ride on, young lord, ride on!

Her father wills and she obeys,
The custom of her class;
'Tis Land not Love the trothing sways—
For Land he sells his lass.
Her fair white hand, young lord, is thine,
Her soul, proud fool, her soul is mine,
Ride on, young lord, ride on!

No title high my father bore;
The tenant of thy farm,
He left me what I value more:
Clean heart, clear brain, strong arm
And love for bird and beast and bee
And song of lark and hymn of sea,
Ride on, young lord, ride on!

The boundless sky to me belongs,
The paltry acres thine;
The painted beauty sings thy songs,
The lavrock lilts me mine;
The hot-housed orchid blooms for thee,
The gorse and heather bloom for me,
Ride on, young lord, ride on!

1. What is the basic action of this poem? In other words, what’s happening here? What’s the plot?
2. Are any ideas, words, or images repeated in this poem? If so, what? Why do you think the poet repeats these elements?
3. Who is the speaker of this poem? To whom is this person speaking?
4. What is the tone of this poem? Identify one or two lines from the poem that illustrate this tone.
5. What is the rhyme scheme of the poem? What is the structure of the poem? In other words, are there stanzas of certain lengths?
6. What do you think this poem is about?
Winter-Tired

By James Edwin Campbell

I wus a settin' by my winder
Lookin' out the other day,
On the Airth all white with snowdrifts —
Look you ever which-a-way;
An’ while it all wus cleanly
Like a soul that's washed from sin,
I could not help a longin'
Fur the robins an' the green.

I am tired of all this sollum white,
Bare boughs an' tongueless brook;
The Airth is like a shrouded corpse
No matter whur I look.
O, I want to see the robins
An' hear the bluebirds sing,
An' in the pon' below the barn
The bullfrog swear its Spring!

I want to see white turn to brown,
An' then the brown turn green,
The hillsides put their mournin' off
As fifty times I've seen.
O, I want to hear that tongue-tied brook
Go singin' on its way,
Ashoutin' as it runs along:
"The robins 've come to stay!"

1. What is the basic action of this poem? In other words, what's happening here? What's the plot?
2. Are any ideas, words, or images repeated in this poem? If so, what? Why do you think the poet repeats these elements?
3. Who is the speaker of this poem? To whom is this person speaking?
4. What is the tone of this poem? Identify one or two lines from the poem that illustrate this tone.
5. What is the rhyme scheme of the poem? What is the structure of the poem? In other words, are there stanzas of certain lengths?
6. What do you think this poem is about?
James Edwin Campbell Quiz

1. Where was James Edwin Campbell born?
2. What is the mountain range near his home?
3. What river flows through his hometown?
4. What war had just ended when he was born?
5. What are the two writing styles he used in his poetry?
6. Besides writing, what else did James Edwin Campbell do for a career?
7. What is the name of the university where he was the first president?
8. How did he die?
10. How many books did he write?
11. True or False? The word *enjambment* refers to a line of poetry that does not end with a comma, period, or any other punctuation.
12. Circle the correct answer: A *stanza* is: the word order in a poem or a unit of lines in a section of a poem or the attitude of the speaker in a poem
13. Is this phrase a simile or metaphor? *The river is a blue ribbon on the brown-haired earth.*
14. Is the speaker in “Compensation” powerful and wealthy?
15. Who is the speaker calling a *hot-house orchid* in Compensation?
16. Is the *tongueless brook* in “Winter Tired” an example of alliteration or personification?
17. What are the Standard English words for the following Appalachian and Black English words?

    winder = ________ Airth = ________ sollum = ________ singin’ = ________