

UNIT OVERVIEW

Unit Length	Twelve to thirteen days. Class Period: 90 minutes
Grade Level(s)/Subject(s)	African-American Cultural Studies
Unit Overview	At a time in our country when discrimination and prejudice against descendants of American chattel slavery (DACS) continues to impact our community, it is imperative that students, our future leaders, uncover the unconscious biases they possess against others based on their language practices. This unit explores Black English (African American Vernacular English) including its history, development, and features. The unit aims to help students understand that Black English is a legitimate language consisting of a morphology, lexicon, and a grammar, features that all languages share.
Objectives & Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students will uncover unconscious biases towards Black English and the people who speak it. ● Students will learn about the history of Black English. ● Students will learn about structural features of Black English. ● Students will learn about the communicative dexterity and power associated with Black English. ● Students will read essays written by culturally and linguistically-diverse authors about their English languaging practices. ● Students will answer the question <i>Should Black English be allowed in academic and business spaces?</i>
Standards	<p>Common Core ELA State Standards</p> <p>RI9-10.2 Determine a central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of a text.</p> <p>SL 9-10.4/11-12.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and substance.</p> <p>SL 9-10.5/SL 11-12.5 Make strategic use of digital media (e.g. textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in</p>

Black English (AAVE)

Unit by the Florin High School Panthers,

part of the 2022 cohort of *The 1619 Project* Education Network

	presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.
Facilitation Resources	Black English Unit Slide Deck Difficult Conversation Discussion Stems Born on the Water
Performance Task(s)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1.5 pages, 12-point Times New Roman font, Double spaced essay5-7 minutes podcast <p>Final Reflection Essay Prompt: What connected with you about Black English during the unit? What did not connect with you? What misconception did you begin this unit with that you now understand better? What was the most important activity, concept, reading, or video you engaged with? Why?</p> <p>Collaborative Podcast Discussion:</p> <p>To what extent should Black English be welcomed in academic and business spaces?</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Why can it be important to welcome AAVE in academic and business spaces?</p> <p>These two activities require students to reflect on the ideas presented and learned throughout this unit.</p>
Assessment/Evaluation	Teacher created rubrics for the essays

DAILY LESSONS AND RESOURCES

Day 1

Lesson Objective(s) or Essential Question(s)
What is Black English? What are its characteristics? Students will begin to think about their understanding of Black English. Students will characterize people who speak standard English and people who speak Black English. What do you understand about language, North American Black culture and Black English?
Lesson Materials & Resources
1. Binder paper 2. Unit Opening Questions handout
Lesson Activities
1. Students answer the questions “What is Black English?” and “What are the characteristics of Black English?” on a piece of paper. 2. Students share their answers with their seat neighbors. 3. Students share their answers aloud, one at a time, as the teacher writes them on a visible Google slide. 4. Class discusses patterns they notice and any ideas that resonate with them. 5. Without the help of the Internet, students answer unit opening questions based on their prior knowledge. 6. Students are divided into groups of four with questions divided between groups. 7. Students share their answers with their group members. 8. Students synthesize their group members’ answers and create a Google slide on the classes’ shared Google Slide Presentation. 9. Each group presents their slide. Students modify their notes/answers to record any information presented that they do not have.

Days 2 and 3

Lesson Objective(s) or Essential Question(s)

This lesson provides a quick and beautiful way of telling the history of African Americans. It also sets the context for study of the origins of AAVE.

1. What happened in the lives of African people before being brought to America?
2. How did the enslaved people's experiences during the Middle Passage and in early Colonial America contribute to the development of AAVE?

Lesson Materials & Resources

1. Book: [Born on the Water](#)
2. Handouts: Section Questions [Section 1](#), [Section 2](#), [Section 3](#)
3. Handout: [Poems from the book](#)
4. Document Camera

Lesson Activities

1. The teacher reads the entire book to students either using the document camera or by opening the book toward the students.
2. Read the book one section at a time using the document camera so that students can see the pictures in detail.
3. Students will have the individual poems from the book in a [handout](#) for them to annotate their noticing and analysis.
4. After the teacher reads a section, students will re-read the poem on their handouts and answer the reflection questions on the Section Questions handouts.
5. Repeat steps 2-4 until the entire book is read.
6. Students will answer the following reflection questions:

How do you think language was formed in America among the enslaved people considering what you have learned in this lesson?

What kind of language do you think was developed?

Day 4

Lesson Objective(s) or Essential Question(s)

What is language? Are some languages “more proper/more correct than others? Where did Black English originate?

Lesson Materials & Resources

1. Binder paper
2. YouTube Video: [African American English Through the Years by Dr. Lisa Green](#)
3. Handout: [African American English Through the Years](#)

Lesson Activities

1. Students are shown a list of [American English varieties](#).
2. Ask students to rank how familiar or unfamiliar they are with each variety.
3. Class discussion about their rankings.
4. Students take notes from [slide presentation](#) about linguists' understanding of language.
5. In groups of four, students discuss each linguistic truism.
6. Students watch an excerpt from *African American English Through the Years on YouTube*.
7. While watching the video, students complete the handout.
8. Students finish the video and notetaking as homework, if necessary.

Days 5 and 6

Lesson Objective(s) or Essential Question(s)

What were the unique circumstances of the descendants of American slaves and their incredible impact on American life and language?

How do the speech varieties from the African American community reflect (1) the imprint of African language systems, (2) the influences of regional British and Southern American dialects, and (3) the creativity and resilience of people living through oppression, segregation and the fight for equality?

Lesson Materials & Resources

1. [Talking Black in America](#) 56:49 min
2. [“Talking Black in America” Viewing Guides](#)

[Chapter 1](#), [Chapter 2](#), [Chapter 3](#), [Chapter 4](#), [Chapter 5](#), [Chapter 6](#), [Chapter 7](#)

Lesson Activities

1. Students will watch the video in 15-minute segments.
2. During these segments, students are taking notes.
3. At the end of the 15-minute segment, students will have 5 minutes to share their notes with their seat partner. Then, working with partners, students will have 7 minutes to write answers to the questions on the viewing guide.
4. Students repeat step 3 until the class finishes the video and activities (3 times). This step will continue until the next day.
5. At this point in the unit, students have learned new concepts and been asked to think about language(s) in new ways.
6. Quick write: What questions do you have about information in the video? What ideas about language introduced in this class are new for you? How are you connecting with these new ideas? How are you not connecting with these ideas?

Day 7

Lesson Objective(s) or Essential Question(s)

What are some features of Black English?

Lesson Materials & Resources

[“This is Not a Small Voice”](#) poem by Sonia Sanchez

[“Steps to Follow When Reading Poetry”](#) handout

YouTube Video: [African American Vernacular English episode 1](#)

YouTube Video: [African American Vernacular English episode 2](#)

YouTube Video: [African American Vernacular English episode 3](#)

YouTube Video: [African American Vernacular English episode 4](#)

Lesson Activities

1. Students read, analyze, and discuss Sanchez’s poem.
2. Students are divided into four groups.
3. Each group is assigned an episode from the *African American Vernacular English* YouTube video series.
4. Each group takes notes on the main idea(s) and examples presented in the assigned video.
5. Groups create a slide on our collaborative Google Slides presentation.
6. Groups present their slide to the class.

Day 8 and 9

Lesson Objective(s) or Essential Question(s)
What is standard English? What is the history of standard English? Who decides “the standard”? What are the benefits of standard American English? Are there problems in the way standard American English is taught in schools?
Lesson Materials & Resources
Information and discussion questions are on the Black English Google Slides presentation
Lesson Activities
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Present the information on the slides2. Think Pair Share3. Class discussion

Day 10

Lesson Objective(s) or Essential Question(s)

Why can it be important to welcome AAVE in academic and business spaces?

Lesson Materials & Resources

1. **Excerpt from** [“Should Writers Use They Own English?”](#) by Dr. Vershawn Ashanti Young (paragraphs 1 & 2)
2. [1974 CCCC Resolution](#) on students’ right to their own pattern and variety of language
3. **Handout:** [Translation Chart](#) for *Should Students Writers Use They Own English?*

Lesson Activities

1. Students read the excerpt with the assistance of the teacher.
2. In partners, students translate their assigned passage into standard American English.
3. Students compare and evaluate the communicative effectiveness of the original and the translation.

Day 11

Lesson Objective(s) or Essential Question(s)
Is Black English a Language according to the renowned Black writer James Baldwin?
Lesson Materials & Resources
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Essay: “If Black English Isn’t a Language, Then Tell Me, What Is?” by James Baldwin2. Note taking handout for “If Black English Isn’t a Language, Then Tell Me, What Is?”3. Reading Questions in slideshow
Lesson Activities
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Number paragraphs.2. Jigsaw reading in groups of three or four using Reading Questions handout.3. Create collaborative Slides presentation for assigned section of the essay.4. Present Slide to class.5. Reading reflection

Day 12

Lesson Objective(s) or Essential Question(s)

Who else has written about their English languaging practices?

Lesson Materials & Resources

1. [“Mother Tongue”](#) by Amy Tan
2. [“How to Tame a Wild Tongue”](#) by Gloria Anzaldua

Lesson Activities

1. Number paragraphs for the essay.
2. Students will work in groups of four
3. Each person in the group will read their assigned paragraphs.
4. Answer comprehension questions for the assigned paragraphs.
5. As a group, create a poster that summarizes main ideas in the essay.
6. In groups discuss the essay
7. Gallery Walk
8. Compare and contrast essays.

Day 13

Lesson Objective(s) or Essential Question(s)
Final Unit Reflection
Lesson Materials & Resources
1. Chromebooks
Lesson Activities
<p><u>Final Unit Assessment: Reflective Essay</u></p> <p>Prompt: What connected with you about Black English during the unit? What did not connect with you? What misconception did you begin this unit with that you now understand better. What was the most important activity, concept, reading, or video you engaged with? Why?</p> <p>1.5 pages, 12-point Times New Roman, double spaced.</p> <p><u>Final Unit Assessment: Podcast</u></p> <p>Podcast Discussion Question:</p> <p>To what extent should Black English be welcomed in academic and business spaces?</p> <p>Why can it be important to welcome AAVE in academic and business spaces?</p> <p>Groups of three (host, and two guests)</p>