

NOTE: Please make sure you sign up for the computer lab for the following lessons: 2, 11, 12, 17, 19, 23, 27, 28, 32, and 35 – 43.

TITLE OF LESSON

American Literature Unit 1 Lesson 1 – What Is Slang? / What Is a Dialect? / What is Language?
How is language used to express social identity?

TIME ESTIMATE FOR THIS LESSON

One class period

ALIGNMENT WITH STANDARDS

California – Eng 11-12: R1.0-3, 2.0, 2.4-5, W1.0-2, W/O1.0-2, L/S1.0

MATERIALS

“Dialect” – Reading
“History of African-American English” – Reading
“Board’s Decision on Black English Stirs Debate” – Reading
“Talking the Talk” – Reading
Daily Log – Student Page
Freyer Diagram – Student Page
Vocabulary Worksheet – Student Page
American Literature Sample Syllabus – Teacher Page
Internet / Computer Lab Permission form (Teacher Created)

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- To review class policies and procedures
 - To create a class definition for the word “slang”
 - To read a technical definition of the word “dialect”
 - To define technical terms about language
 - To identify the similarities and differences between language and dialect
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EXPLANATION OF LESSON

Today, students begin a unit that will explore an individual’s role in society and how an individual contributes to social change. They will use the study of language to examine the social reality of different groups in the United States. They will see that language is not fixed, but changes over time, just as ideas of right and wrong change over time. Using the literature of Mark Twain as a basis, they will perceive how language expresses dynamics of power. And, just as Twain uses language to convey power dynamics, the students will use their understanding of language to understand power.

Students will begin by developing a vocabulary of linguistics. This will assist them as they tackle the first novel ever written entirely in a vernacular dialect. Their study begins with the concepts of slang and dialect, concepts that draw on knowledge they already have within them, of their own forms of communication. They will encounter a lot of new vocabulary words today, and will need to utilize all of their strategies for defining new words. They will be using **Vocabulary Worksheets** to learn methods for studying for the verbal section of the SAT, which they will be taking this year. You will need to photocopy these worksheets, and the class reading “Dialects,” as well as the homework articles, “History of African-American English,” “Board’s Decision on Black English Stirs Debate,” and “Talking the Talk.” You will need a copy of the **Daily Log** for each student. You will also need a copy of the **Freyer Diagram** found in the *Student Pages* section of our site. If you have forgotten what a **Freyer Diagram** is or how to use it, please see the *Teaching Strategies* portion of our web site where you can find the explanation and instructions.

You will need to create an Internet/Computer Lab Permission form. Before you create your own, check in with your school’s technology person or site administrator and find out if there is one that exists.

Finally, you will need to create a course syllabus (which houses your grading policy, rules, and expectations) that needs to be signed by both the student and the student’s parent/guardian. Using the **American Literature Sample Syllabus** found in this unit’s *Teacher Pages*, create a syllabus that reflects your individual classroom needs. **DO NOT** print and use the sample syllabus as it is! It must be changed to reflect your policies, your name, your school, your room number, your available times, etc.

FOCUS AND MOTIVATE STUDENTS – WARM-UP ACTIVITY

- 1) Classroom Procedure – Review class policies and expectations for the students. Review the syllabus and procedures for attendance, grading, and so forth. Distribute Internet/Computer Lab Permission Forms to every student, and tell the students to get them signed by a parent/guardian and return them tomorrow.
- 2) **Binders** – Tell students they must keep a binder with all of their work for your class in it. This should be a three ring binder so that students can easily pull papers out and put papers in. They are responsible for all of their work. They should never throw any assignment away, as any assignment may be used to create a final piece of writing. All assignments will be placed in their binder and turned in for a grade. They will turn in their binders at the end of every three weeks (lessons 15, 30, and 44). Have them divide their binders into 6 sections. Sections should be titled in the following manner: journals, lecture/discussion notes, readings, worksheets/handouts, test/quizzes, and vocabulary. Tell students their binders are due tomorrow along with their signed syllabus and class set of expectations.
- 3) **Daily Log** – Hand out a **Daily Log** to each student (This can be found in the *Student Pages* section of this unit). Tell them that starting today and every day after this, they should come into the room and fill in their **Daily Log**. Tell them they are responsible for all of their assignments. If they are absent, it is their responsibility to ask someone in the class for the Daily Log entry and then get the work they have missed. They must complete all assignments adequately in order to pass the class. Tell them it is their job as a class to work together, to help each other out, to make sure everyone passes. Tell students to copy the Daily Log below.
- 4) Assign Groups – Place students in the groups they will be assigned to for this unit.

| Date | Journal | Lecture Discussion | Activity | Readings | Homework |
|------|---|--------------------|---|----------|--|
| | 1 - Do you speak a dialect? What is it? Why do you think it is a dialect and not a language? (1 page) | | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Brainstorm 2. Freyer Diagram/ Class Definition 3. Reading: “Dialects” 4. Venn Diagram | | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read “History of African American English,” “Board’s Decision on Black English Stirs Debate,” and “Talking the Talk” (due Lesson 3) 2. Highlight/ Annotate articles 3. Define Vocabulary Words and fill out Vocabulary Worksheets. 4. Journal Entry 1 (due Lesson 3) 5. Bring binders, signed Internet/ Computer Lab form, and signed syllabus tomorrow. |

ACTIVITIES – INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP

1. **Brainstorm** – Write the following list on the board prior to class:

| | |
|-------------|---------------------------|
| Puke | Lose your cookies |
| Barf | Hurl |
| Harf | Talk to Ralph |
| Yack | Talk to Earl |
| Blow chunks | Pray to the porcelain god |
| Blow lunch | Kiss the porcelain god |

| | |
|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Toss your cookies | Drive the porcelain bus |
| Bumble | Drive the Buick |
| Boot it | Sell the Buick |
| Double fault | Sell the Porsche |
| Play tag | Technicolor yawn |
| Lose your lunch | Lunch in reverse |

2. Discuss – Ask if anyone knows what these expressions mean. (Of course, they all mean the same thing: throwing up.) Then ask if anyone can think of any words or phrases to add to the list. If someone thinks of one, they should walk up to the board and add it to the list. When the class has thought of as many examples as possible, create a **Freyer Diagram** on the board, with the word “slang” in the middle. (See **Freyer Diagram** in the *Student Pages* section of this unit.) Explain to students that all of the terms they have listed are slang versions of the same idea. Today and for the weeks to come, they will be studying the ways that people think about language. Is there a correct way to speak? Does the way we speak reveal who we are, where we are from, and what we believe? How are we judged by our language and how do we judge others? Does speaking a certain way give us power? Even something that seems informal and familiar, like slang, can give us a lot of information about culture. They will learn more about some of these ideas today in class.
3. **Freyer Diagram** – Tell the class that they will use the diagram to create a class definition for the word “slang.” They should begin by thinking of ideas for the sections marked “examples” and “non-examples,” including (but not limited to) the ideas from the list. If they are familiar with the word slang, this should be easy for them – slang is something teenagers are experts in. After they have listed several examples and non-examples for “slang,” they will fill out the section marked “characteristics.” Explain to them that the question they want to answer for that section is “how do I know if a word or expression is slang?” Have them work out the criteria.
4. **Class Definition** – Now, they will create a definition for “slang” based on their criteria so far. Their characteristics sections will probably list things like “it’s casual,” “not proper English,” or “you use it with friends, not with teachers.” (If they list a reason such as “teenagers use it,” encourage them to be more precise. Teenagers use language other than slang also, so that is not a very descriptive characteristic.) Tell them to work on a definition that incorporates their characteristics and uses the examples to illustrate their meaning. Tell them this may be tricky to do – even linguists have a difficult time defining what slang is. Call on people to write definitions for slang on the board. Now, ask if there is a way to create one class definition from all of the definitions you have written on the board. Take a volunteer to try. Write down their answer. Ask the class if that definition will work for the whole class. If anyone says no, ask him/her what he/she would change. Change it directly on the first definition, crossing out words, adding words, and working on punctuation. You are modeling for them revision strategies and reminding them that erasing should not be done. They may end up going back to the original idea; so it is always helpful to see the changes made. Let as many people try as want to until the whole class can agree upon a definition. The whole process should take no more than ten minutes. Have students title a sheet of paper “Unit 1 Vocabulary List” and write the agreed upon definition on this vocabulary list that they will keep in the front of their binders. Tell students that they must keep this list in their binder, as you will collect it three days before the quiz in order to correct it. They will also learn some new ways to study vocabulary during this unit, in order to prepare for the SAT.
5. **Teacher Read Aloud** – Distribute the reading “Dialects” to each student. Tell them that you are going to read aloud a selection about language. They have been working on one descriptor of language – the term “slang.” This is a term used by people who study language. They are going to learn about another term used by linguists, the term “dialect.” While you read, they should follow along silently and underline any words that they don’t understand. Read the selection to them. Spend about five minutes on this. It is a very brief reading, but you will want to read slowly, or re-read parts, and check for comprehension.
6. **Vocabulary Strategies** – When you are done reading, write the following words on the board: idiolect, dialect, mutually intelligible, systematic, linguistic. Ask students to add to this list any words from the selection that they need defined. Make some suggestions for how they might figure out the unknown words from the reading. They could try substituting the unknown word with a word that makes sense. They might skip the unknown word, and read to the end of the sentence or paragraph, then return to the word after getting clues this way. They might write the words they don’t know in the margins, and then return to them after reading the whole article.

They could try linking the unknown words to words they know. They could look for the word in another part of the selection, and see if more clues are there. Point out that adult readers use all of these strategies when coming to an unknown word.

7. **Group Vocabulary Work** – Have students assemble in their assigned groups. Have students choose *Group Roles* (see below) or chose for them. Assign each group some of the words from the list and have them define them. Take no more than ten minutes for this activity.
8. **Class Definitions** – Call on Presenters to say their definitions while you write them (or tell presenters to write definitions for their words on the board). Ask the class if these definitions will work for the whole class. If anyone says no, ask them what they would change. Change it directly on the first definition, crossing out words, adding words, and working on punctuation. Let as many people try as want to until the whole class can agree upon definitions.
9. Have Dictionary Keepers from each group give the dictionary definitions of their group’s words. Ask students if there is anything missing from their definitions, based on what the dictionary says. Ask Dictionary Keepers to add to the definitions on the board. Have students write the agreed upon definitions on their Unit 1 Vocabulary List. Take no more than ten minutes to create and refine the class definitions.
10. **Venn Diagram** – Now that the class has created a small working vocabulary of linguistic terms, tell them that they are going to be linguists during this unit. Linguistics is the “science of language.” Tell students that they will read and write, as always, but they will also be studying how language works. They will think about ways that language is used to identify certain groups of people, and the way they themselves use language differently in different situations. Tell students that they have begun to do this by examining slang and dialect, which are ways of describing a particular type of language that is used by a specific group or during a specific time period. One question you especially want them to consider is if there is a “correct” standard – for language, or for anything (though right now you may want to keep the focus on language.) If everyone has written down the class definitions from the board, erase them, and draw a **Venn Diagram**. (If you have forgotten what a **Venn Diagram** looks like, its purpose, or how to use it, please see the *Teaching Strategies* portion of our site.) In one circle, write the word “language,” and in the other, the word “dialect.” They should be familiar with how a Venn Diagram works, but remind them that they will write how language and dialect are the same in the overlapping part of the circles, and how language and dialect are different in the outer edges of the circles. Call on as many people as possible to give you ideas for filling in the diagram. Encourage them to use examples from the selection you read. Remind them that if you are writing, so are they. All students should be taking notes in their **Venn Diagrams**.
11. **Review Homework** – Tell students to use the Venn Diagram to help them answer the journal questions: Do you speak a dialect? What is it? Why do you think it is a dialect and not a language?
12. Distribute the articles for homework and tell them to read the articles, as well as **highlighting and annotating** them. Ask them to also answer this question about the articles: Are the writers of the articles speaking a dialect? Why or why not? The articles will be discussed during Lesson 3. Tell them to write down the following words:

| | |
|----------------|------------------|
| Ebonics | Standard English |
| Vernacular | Proponents |
| Off the hizzie | Homie |
| L7 | Cash Language |
| Manifest | Proficiency |
| Rudiment | |

Distribute the **Vocabulary Worksheet** (two to each student). Tell students that they should define their vocabulary words on their Vocabulary List, writing down the sentences in the reading that help them to determine the definition. They must fill out the **Vocabulary Worksheet**. Tell them that they will be using these vocabulary worksheets to learn ways to study for the SAT, which they will take this year. The vocabulary worksheets will be due on the same day that their vocabulary lists are due, three days before the vocabulary quiz (Lesson 6). Tell students to fill out items one through five on the worksheets for the following words: proponents, proficiency. Items one through five include the following: meaning, synonym, part of speech,

original sentence, and antonym. Students should be accustomed to finding the meaning and writing an original sentence for each word, as they did this for vocabulary words throughout English 2. Ask for volunteers to remind the class of what “synonym” and “antonym” mean. Tell them to take notes, so that they will remember tonight when they are filling out the sheet. Remind them of the meaning of “part of speech” – it describes what type of word a word is; it tells its purpose. Offer some examples from the vocabulary list (other than the ones assigned for the worksheets) and ask if anyone can tell you what type of word it is: “What about dialect? What kind of word is that? Is a dialect a thing? What kind of word describes a person, place, or thing?” Point out that they can find out what part of speech a word is by looking in the dictionary. This is permitted for that part of the worksheet. You will review the remaining items on the worksheet one a day for the rest of this week. So these sheets will be homework every night until they are completely filled out for each vocabulary word they receive. Remind the class to meet in the library tomorrow.

HOMEWORK

- 1) Read “History of African American English,” “Board’s Decision on Black English Stirs Debate,” and “Talking the Talk.”
 - 2) [Highlight/ Annotate](#) articles and say if the writers are speaking a dialect.
 - 3) Define Vocabulary Words and fill out **Vocabulary Worksheets**.
 - 4) [Journal Entry 1](#).
 - 5) Bring binders, signed Internet/Computer Lab form, and signed syllabus tomorrow.
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GROUP ROLES

Facilitator – Your job is to keep the group focused on the task at hand and to help them generate as many ideas for definitions as possible. It is not your job to come up with the definitions alone. It is your job to encourage/help other group members to come up with the definitions.

Notetaker – Your job is to write out the words the group is giving you. It is not your job to generate all of the definitions. It is your job to help others to give you as many ideas for definitions as possible to write.

Presenter – Your job will be to present your group’s definitions or to write your group’s definitions on the board.

Dictionary Keepers – Your job is to look up the definitions for the words in the dictionary and make any necessary changes to the class definitions. You should not give your group the dictionary definitions; you should present the definitions after the class creates their definitions.

Time Keeper – Your job is to make sure the group completes their assigned job in the amount of time given. It is not your job to complete the task for the group. It is your job to help the facilitator keep the students focused on the task at hand and remind them of the time they have left to finish the work.

DOCUMENTATION FOR PORTFOLIO

Unit 1
None

NOTE: Students will only be placing their formal pieces of writing in their portfolio (the pieces of writing they take through the whole writing process to turn in for a letter grade), their formal projects, and their final exams, all of which should be a demonstration of their mastery of the skills you have been teaching them. All first drafts and other pieces of work should be placed in their binder.

If students have a portfolio from their freshman and sophomore years (they should if they have been working through the ESubjects curricula), they will simply add to it this year. Ask students to bring in their portfolio from previous years, as this will be an opportunity for you to assess their skill levels and get to know them. They should keep these portfolios in class with you at all times. Portfolios should never leave the room.

If your school already has a portfolio system in place, you may want to adhere to that. Or you may want to check in with teachers from your department, as some may have had the students create portfolios last year and they may still have them. Portfolios are the evidence that teachers are teaching and that students are learning. They exist for both the benefit of the teacher, the student, the parents, and school personnel and are meant to be a helpful tool in terms of assessing growth over a period of time. So go out of your way to find already existing portfolios and be sure to make new ones for all students who do not have one. 8 ½ x 11-inch folders are perfect for this.