

American Literature: The Concept of the American Dream 1855-1925

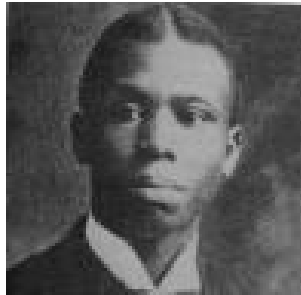
Carl Sandburg



Edgar Lee Masters



Paul Lawrence Dunbar



*Universal Design for Learning
Grade 11
Erin Mulloy-Flores
Merrillville Community School Corporation*

Author's Note

My name is Erin Mulloy-Flores, and I am an English teacher at Merrillville High School in Merrillville, Indiana. Merrillville High School has about 2100 students with an extremely diverse student body. I am currently in my third year of teaching having graduated from Purdue University in May 2002. My teaching assignments for this academic year include American Literature and Etymology for college bound juniors, American Literature for juniors, and freshman honors English. This particular unit is geared for students in Junior American Literature who need more intensive instruction in their reading and writing skills. This class is also an inclusion environment and is co-taught with a special education teacher. I do most of the teaching, and my co-teacher ensures the special education students are receiving the services they need, such as modified assignments or extended work time.

I designed this unit based on the reading selections that are in the textbook assigned for the class, which is McDougal Littell's American Literature edition of *The Language of Literature*. The reading assignments include the following:

- Article in textbook entitled "The American Dream"
- "Chicago" by Carl Sandburg
- "Lucinda Matlock" by Edgar Lee Masters
- "Richard Cory" and "Minivan Cheevy" by Edwin Arlington Robinson
- "We Wear the Mask" and "Sympathy" by Paul Lawrence Dunbar

Even though the students in this class have a textbook, work done in the classroom will be completed on laptops. They will be using a computer program called Kurzweil to read their assignments. Kurzweil allows students to work at their own pace. It also will read to them at various speeds, highlight the text as it reads, and provide definitions for words they do not know. For work that is not completed in class, students will be allowed to do the work at home using the assigned textbook.

Standards Covered

Indiana Academic Standards

- 11.1.3 – Analyze the meaning of analogies encountered, analyzing specific comparisons as well as relationships and inferences.
- 11.2.4 – Make reasonable assertions about an author’s arguments by using elements of the text to defend and clarify interpretations.
- 11.2.5 – Analyze an author’s implicit and explicit assumptions and beliefs about a subject.
- 11.3.2 – Analyze the way in which the theme or meaning of a selection represents a view or comment on life, using textual evidence to support the claim.
- 11.3.3 – Analyze the ways in which irony, tone, mood, the author’s style, and the “sound” of language achieve specific rhetorical (persuasive) or aesthetic (artistic) purposes or both.
- 11.3.4 – Analyze ways in which poets use imagery, personification, figures of speech, and sounds to evoke readers’ emotions.
- 11.3.5 – Analyze recognized works of literature (American, British, world) representing a variety of genres and traditions that:
 - trace the development of the major periods of literature.
 - contrast the major themes, styles, and trends in different periods.
 - evaluate the influences (philosophical, political, religious, ethical, and social) of the historical period for a given novel that shaped the characters, plot, and setting.
- 11.4.10 – Review, evaluate, and revise writing for meaning, clarity, achievement of purpose, and mechanics.
- 11.4.11 – Edit and proofread one’s own writing, as well as that of others, using an editing checklist.
- 11.5.2 – Write responses to literature that:
 - demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the significant ideas in works or passages.
 - analyze the use of imagery, language, universal themes, and unique aspects of the text.
 - support important ideas and viewpoints through accurate and detailed references to the text and to other works.
 - demonstrate an understanding of the author’s style and an appreciation of the effects created.
 - identify and assess the impact of perceived ambiguities, nuances, and complexities within the text.
- 11.5.3 – Write reflective compositions that:
 - explore the significance of personal experiences, events, conditions, or concerns by using rhetorical strategies, including narration, description, exposition, and persuasion.
 - draw comparisons between specific incidents and broader themes that illustrate the writer’s important beliefs or generalizations about life.

- maintain a balance in describing individual events and relating those events to more general and abstract ideas.
- 11.6.1-11.6.3 – Students write using standard English conventions.

Information above is from <http://www.doe.state.in.us/standards/>

Planning Pyramid

What should students know?

Some students will know

- that “Chicago” and “Lucinda Matlock” show two different aspects of the American Dream and what those differences are
- that the narrative style and characterization Robinson uses help to develop the themes in his poems
- how to find specific examples from “Richard Cory” and “Miniver Cheevy” that support the theme
- how the symbolism in Dunbar’s poems relate to the themes that are being conveyed

Most students will know

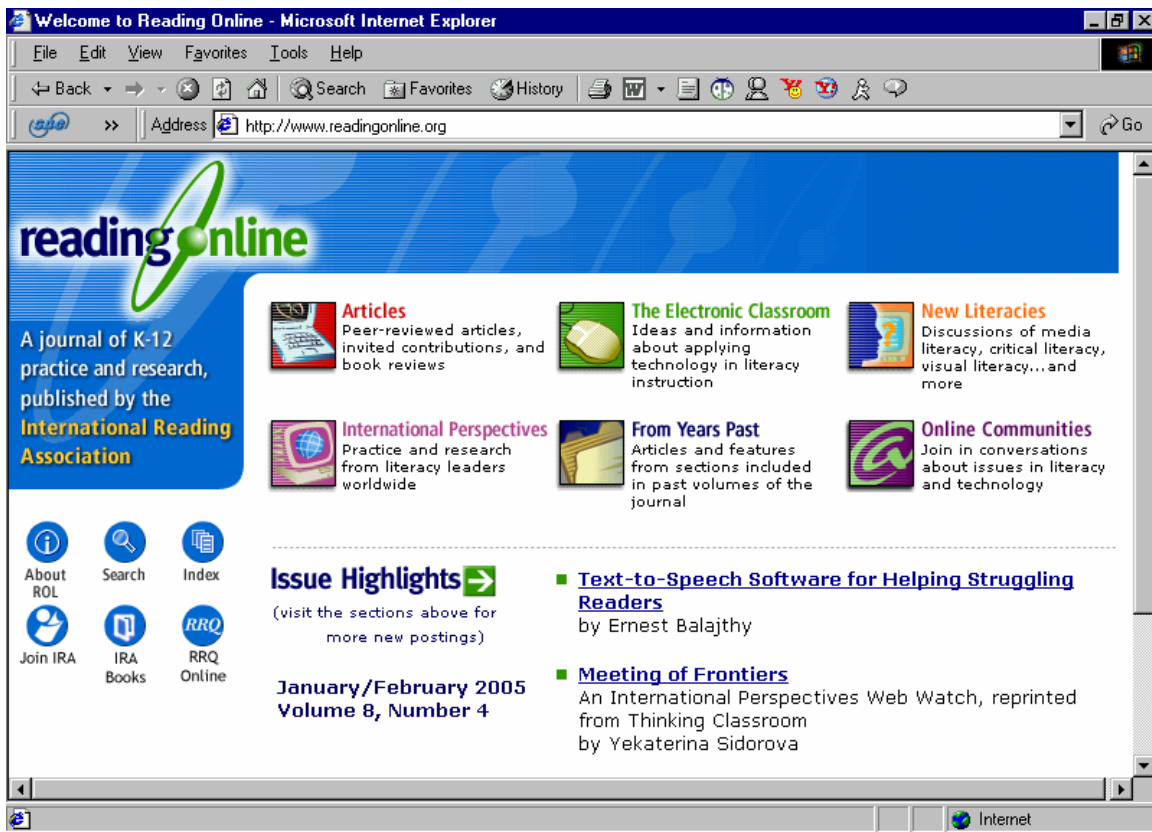
- the concept of the American Dream
- the definition of industrialization and how it was affecting American workers
- the tone of the poems “Chicago” and “Lucinda Matlock”
- that Sandburg is describing the industrialization of Chicago and the examples that show it
- examples from “Lucinda Matlock” that show the poem is about rural life
- Robinson uses methods of characterization to describe the people in his poems
- Miniver Cheevy only dreams of the past because he does not want to face reality
- that the theme of the poem is that even though Richard Cory achieves the American Dream, it does not make him happy
- what the mask and caged bird symbolize in Dunbar’s poem
- how to integrate elements of poetry into their “Hometown Poem”

All students will know

- Carl Sandburg is known as a Chicago poet
- Sandburg’s poetry focused on urban life and the poverty and corruption he saw there
- Edgar Lee Masters and Edwin Arlington Robinson wrote about rural life
- Edgar Lee Masters wrote *Spoon River Anthology* and “Lucinda Matlock” is one of the poems from the anthology
- Paul Lawrence Dunbar was the first African American to earn a living through writing
- the American Dream did not come true for most people
- most Americans worked in factories under horrible conditions
- that the speaker in “Chicago” describes both the good and bad of the city
- “Chicago” and “Lucinda Matlock” are free verse poems
- “Richard Cory” and “Minivan Cheevy” are narrative poems
- Richard Cory commits suicide at the end of the poem
- Dunbar’s poems show that the American Dream does not come true for everyone

- the speakers in Dunbar’s poems are most likely African Americans and are dealing with issues of racism
- how to create their own “Hometown Poem”

Teacher Library



The Electronic Classroom
<http://www.readingonline.org>

This website offers ideas and articles on ways to integrate technology into the classroom as a way to improve reading comprehension with students. The site also allows users to join in online conversations about literacy issues and instruction methods in the classroom. There is also a journal produced to which users can subscribe.

Learner Activities

What materials and resources will be useful for engaging students in meaningful learning activities?

Teacher Planet - Microsoft Internet Explorer

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Back Forward Stop Home Search Favorites History Print View Source

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FEATURED SITES

Master's in Education Online

TeacherPlanet now features over 150 theme based resource pages. Many of these can be found by searching our calendar. Based on feedback from our members, we are now also providing an Alphabetical Listing of all themes. Simply choose a letter from A to Z to begin your search.

A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R | S | T | U | V | W | X | Y | Z | #'s

As usual, feedback can be sent to us at any via our **FEEDBACK PAGE**.

◀ **January 2005** **February 2005** **March 2005** ▶

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
		1 Black History Month	2 Ground Hog Day	3 Free Information on Renaissance Software	4 Pet Owner's Month	5

What's New!

Item #4 - Hundreds of our Members have completed their Degree Online. Read More by Clicking [HERE!](#)

Item #5 - 1000 Great Sites for Teachers: Click [HERE!](#)

Help Struggling Readers

Teacher Planet

<http://www.teacherplanet.com>

Teacher Planet provides teacher with a variety of resources for the classroom. There are lesson plans, theme units, books, posters, etc. that teachers can use in their classrooms. Also, there is a newsletter that has information that includes newly available products and other teacher resources (websites, articles, etc.).

Assessment

This is a rubric for scoring the “Hometown Poem” the students are going to write after reading “Chicago” and “Lucinda Matlock”

Poem Requirements	Comments	Score
<p>Length – Poem must be a minimum of twenty lines, and it should consist of at least two stanzas. Your stanza break should be made with a purpose, such as a shift of ideas or new aspect of life in your hometown.</p>		<p>_____ /10</p>
<p>Content – The poem should focus on your hometown, and it needs to take on a specific tone toward the subject. The poem should also provide different aspects of life in your hometown.</p>		<p>_____ /15</p>
<p>Elements of Poetry – The following needs to be included in the poem: two similes, one example of personification, two examples of imagery, and one example of alliteration.</p>		<p>_____ /15</p>

In addition to this rubric, students will be assessed on their responses to reading questions they must answer while using Kurzweil. Also, at the end of the unit, there will be a cumulative test that will include true/false questions, matching sections, and multiple choice questions. A short essay question will be added as well to see if students can convey what they learned through their writing.

Modifications

Planning for Academic Diversity

Learning Barrier	Possible Solutions	Web Link Resources
Student cannot read at grade level	Kurzweil can read the text to the student; it will also highlight the text as it reads it. This way, the student can see and hear the word pronounced at the same time. Kurzweil will also read at various speeds for the student.	http://www.glencoe.com/sec/teachingtoday/educationupclose.phtml/29
Student has difficulty comprehending the material	While the student is reading material through Kurzweil, there will be various stopping points where the student will have to answer questions over what he has just read. This helps because it forces the student to look at a smaller body of text for the solutions. It also checks the student's comprehension along the way instead of just at the end of the selection.	http://ldsupport.homestead.com/Readingcomprehension.html
Student has difficulty mastering the vocabulary of the unit	Kurzweil has a feature that allows students to look up the definition of any word he does not now. Also, throughout the	http://www.prel.org/products/re_/ES0419.htm

	reading selection, difficult words can be highlighted as the target vocabulary for the selection. There would be exercises for the student to complete for practice as well.	
Student needs the instructional material in a language other than English	Kurzweil has a dictionary that allows ENL students to look up words in another language.	http://owl.english.purdue.edu http://esl.fis.edu/parents/advice/f-hwk.htm
Student has difficulty with handwriting (speed or accuracy)	Most of the student work in the classroom will be done on the computer; therefore, the student can type all his work and the computer will help identify the mistakes. If the work is not done in class, the assignment can be taken home where the student can work at his own speed as well.	http://www.healthyplace.com/communities/add/judy/dysgraphia_1.htm http://www.cdl.org/resources//reading_room/graphomotor.html
Student needs additional challenge	In addition to the questions a student must answer as he reads his assignments through Kurzweil, there can be various activities for him to complete that will give him more challenge, such as researching a related topic on the Internet and then writing paragraph responses on the	http://www.kidsource.com/kidsource/pages/ed.gifted.html

	information researched.	
Student had difficulty with calculating activities	Breaking activities up in to various steps can help the student be more successful. Different steps allow the student to complete the activity in sections, so there is no issue with what needs to be done first.	http://ldonline.org
Student needs help with conducting research	When requiring a student to conduct research (most will be Internet based), guidelines can be given to the student to help him narrow his research appropriately. Giving the student basic questions that should be answered during the research can help as well. Also, Draftbuilder, a program we will be using, is writing software that helps a student organize his research information.	http://lib.northern.edu/helper/FAQ.html http://vm.cfsan.fda.gov/~comm/students.html