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Round Robin

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Dear Readers,

We are continuing our presentation of readers' ideas for teaching reading skills at the secondary level. The following is again directed to English teachers.

Dear Editor:

Due to the growing interest and necessity for Black Literature to be taught in schools today, a number of students could possibly have trouble understanding Black English or Non-Standard Dialect. Books that may be used in a high school literature class could include books about black life such as *Cool World*, *Native Son*, *Black Voices*, and *The Best of Simple*. In order for all students to be able to read these books with understanding, some basic knowledge of Black English is a necessary prerequisite.

I would begin my introduction to any one of these books by first presenting a transparency which would compare Standard and Non-Standard Dialects.

**BLACK ENGLISH**

**COMPARISONS:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Variable</strong></th>
<th><strong>Standard</strong></th>
<th><strong>Non-Standard</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Linking verb</td>
<td><em>he is</em> going.</td>
<td><em>he —</em> goin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plural</td>
<td><em>I have</em> five cents.</td>
<td><em>I got</em> five cent—.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject</td>
<td><em>John lives in Troy.</em></td>
<td><em>John he live in Troy.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verb</td>
<td><em>I drank</em> the milk.</td>
<td><em>I drunk</em> the milk.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Past He walked home. He walk—home.
Vb. Agreement He runs home. He run— home.
Future I will go home. I'ma go home.
“If” I asked if he did it. I ask did he do it.
Negation I don’t have any. I don’t got none.
He didn’t go. He ain’t go.
Indef. article I want an apple. I want a apple.
Pronoun We have to do it. Us got to do it.
Preposition He is over at his house. He over to his house.
Be He is here. He be here.
Do No he doesn’t No he don’t.

The class could discuss these and skim through a few pages of the book looking for examples of the Non-Standard English. A record of *Simple* could then be played to enable the students to hear differences in dialect and also any words that are unknown to them, or unknown in a certain usage, such as slang, could be discussed. A discussion of Black slang would follow as I would ask the class for meanings of various slang words. The Dictionary of Afro-American Slang, now in paperback form, could be consulted after class discussion of word meanings.

Connie Gross

REFERENCES