**POWER SENTENCE PARAPHRASE**

**OPENING ACTIVITY**

***Introduce or review a topic by projecting a paragraph or short segment from a source under study and have students (or pairs of students) write a Power Sentence Paraphrase.***

1. Answer the question below creating one Power Sentence Paraphrase of the text. Be sure to keep it:
   * **Clear** (it answers the question clearly and does not leave the reader with more questions)
   * **Specific** (descriptive enough and includes the necessary elements from the reading – this may require a complex or compound sentence)
   * **Concise** (does not use unnecessary words, phrases, or clauses which do not add substance to the overall meaning)
2. Switch sentences with a partner. The partner will edit your sentence for clarity, specificity, and concision.

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**Question: Why did coon songs become a national craze during the Gilded Age?**

*Almost without exception coon songs were calculated to be hilariously funning. Overwhelmingly they were based in caricature. Over time they also came to share another notable quality. They tended to feature syncopated rhythmic structures – “catchy” rhythms – form associated with minstrel material but also with performance styles characteristic of black American folk music. The degree of syncopation varied from song to song, but the syncopated style was a constant in the coon song genre, and was perceived (correctly) to be a form of “black music,” hence identified with black life. The rhythmic structure suggests that the music originated as dance music, offered in a form essentially new to whites, though of course not to blacks, and this rhythmic dimension of the music was clearly a part of its appeal. Appearing initially in the form of two-steps, cakewalks, or even marches (the parade theme was common), the coon song featured appealing, foot-tapping, time-clapping rhythms accompanying the ostensible funny descriptive lyrics. This was in a word happy music, despite the grossly offensive lyrics as judged by modern sensibilities.*