

Little People, BIG DREAMS

# Ella Fitzgerald



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Illustrated by M<sup>a</sup> Isabel Sánchez Vegara

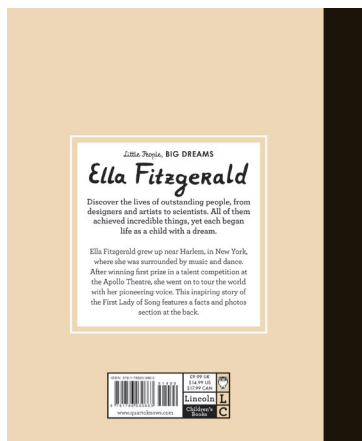
For readers aged 4+ | 9781786030863 | Hardback | £9.99

Lots of the activities and discussion topics in these teacher's notes are deliberately left open to encourage pupils to develop independent thinking around the book. This will help pupils build confidence in their ability to problem solve as individuals and also as part of a group.



## The Front Cover

Why do you think Ella Fitzgerald was outstanding?



## The Blurb

What extra information do you discover when you read the blurb?

In which country did Ella Fitzgerald live?



## The Endpapers

Why were these pictures used for the end papers?

What sort of music do you think the images represent?



What is Ella doing in the illustration?

How do you find out which type of music you like?

Use an electronic survey of your class to find out your favourite musicians. You could extend this across the school and create a display, using graphs and charts, with questions for other people to answer.

Find out where New York is on a map.  
What continent is it in?

What sort of music is jazz?

What sort of home life do you think Ella had?



What do you notice is happening at the funeral of Ella's mother from the illustration?



Why do you think Ella didn't like living with her aunt?

What sort of things do people sometimes do when they are unhappy?

What other ways are there of dealing with unhappiness?

What happens if you start missing a lot of school?

How do you think the adults should have behaved towards Ella?



What can happen if someone runs away from home?

Do you think Ella is managing well on her own? Give reasons to support your answer.

What do you notice in the illustration?



What does the word 'amateur' mean?

What word suggests that there is a very special quality to Ella's singing?



When have you been so excited that you couldn't sleep?

What wonderful things do you think about, when imagining what might occur in the future?

What would be your biggest, most extravagant dream?



What do you think a 'big band' is?

What clues does the illustrator give about where Ella has travelled?

What else do you notice in the pictures that tells you about Ella's life on the road?



What do you think the metaphor, 'turned somersaults with her voice' means?

Can you turn somersaults with your voice?

Can you imitate instruments?

Why do you think Ella never sang a song the same way twice?



In what ways is music important?

Invent new words that have strong rhythm and alliteration that can be sung or chanted.

You could add electronic backing to these.



Why do people sing lullabies?

What simile does the author use to convey the effect of Ella's singing?

What other words, metaphors or similes could you use to describe how people feel when they listen to Ella's music? You might want to use a thesaurus to extend the range of word choice.



Why do you think Ella wanted to go solo?

Find out who some of the other 'jazz greats' were.



Listen to some of Ella's songs. Do you have a favourite?

Using the words:

- bop
- swing
- growled
- swopped
- soared
- pop
- opera
- blues

create a poem about Ella, thinking about rhythm, alliteration and rhyme. You might want to use a thesaurus to extend your range of words.

Practise and see if you need to make any other alterations, and then you can perform, perhaps with some instrumental accompaniment.



Discuss the picture. What does it suggest to you when you look at it alongside reading the text?

What do you think "It isn't where you come from; it's where you're going that counts." means?

How do you think you might use this idea in your own life?

**ELLA FITZGERALD**  
(Born: 1917 • Died: 1996)

 c. 1930	 1938	 c. 1940	 1945
<p>From an early age, Ella Fitzgerald had a passion for dance and an ear for music. She grew up in New York, around the time the biggest names in jazz were performing in the city. Young Ella would take the train to Harlem to see her favourite musicians. But her life changed forever in 1935, when her mother died in an accident. Ella was only 15 and she found it hard to adjust to life without her. She was sent to a foster school, because in a school where she had to work harder than the other kids. This was the time of the Great Depression in America, when people were struggling to make ends meet, and Ella had to dance on the streets of Harlem to make enough money to survive. But one night, aged 17, she entered the</p>		<p>Apollo Theater's amateur talent competition. Ella was planning to dance, but changed her mind when she saw another dancer outperform. She decided to sing instead. Ella was 16 at the time and was later spotted by bandleader Chick Webb. Together, they had a hit with a song called 'A-Tisket, A-Tasket'. Ella went on to have a 30-year musical career. She recorded over 2,000 songs and worked with all the great ones. She was the first African American woman to win a Grammy, adding 12 more to her collection throughout her lifetime. With her warm, smiling voice and talent for improvisation, Ella became known as the 'First Lady of Song' - and one of the best jazz singers of the 20th century.</p>	

Make your own timeline of Ella, showing her birth, death and other important events in her life, including the dates of World War II.

What do you think was special about Harlem?

Why do you think Ella decided to sing instead of taking up dancing?

Find out what a Grammy is.

Look at the list of Ella Fitzgerald song titles on Wikipedia and arrange in alphabetical order.

Choose one of the song titles and create an oral story, where each person adds another sentence to the one that has gone before:

A-Tisket, A-Tasket | Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered | Can't We Be friends | Day Dream | Down In The Depths | East of the Sun and West of the Moon | Fly Me To The Moon | A Foggy Day | The Girl From Ipanema | Have You Met Miss Jones? | Hernando's Hideaway | I Can't Be bothered Now | I Didn't Know What Time It Was | I'm Making Believe | I'm Putting All My Eggs In One Basket | I've Got The World On A String | It's Only A Paper Moon | Let It Snow, Let It Snow, Let It Snow! | On The Sunny Side Of The Street | Pick Yourself Up | Reaching For The Moon | Stairway To The Stars | Wacky Dust | Why Can't You Behave? | You're Laughing At Me

You could record these and use any good ideas to write your own story. Alternatively, create a poem, using one of these titles, thinking about rhythm, pattern and alliteration.

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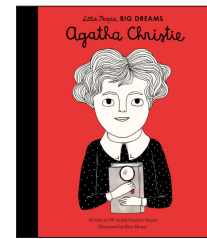
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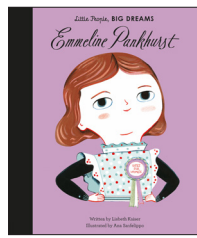
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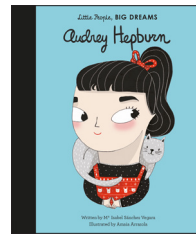
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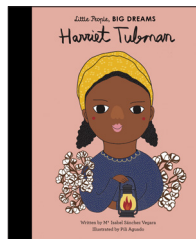
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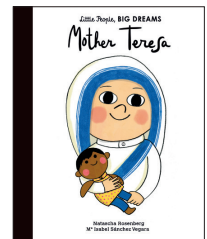
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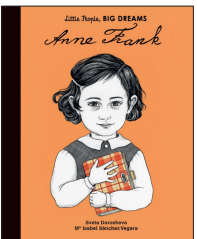
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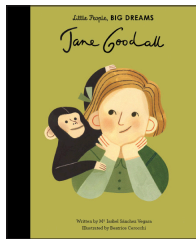
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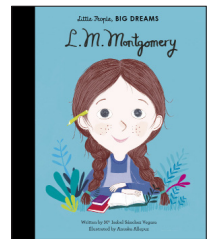
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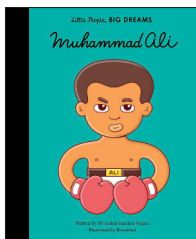
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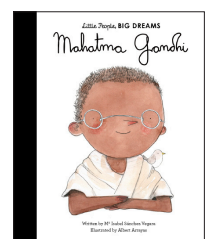
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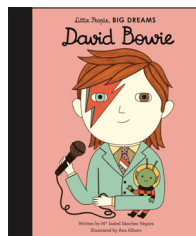
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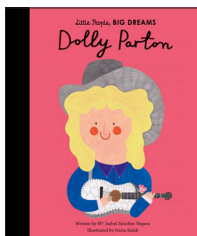
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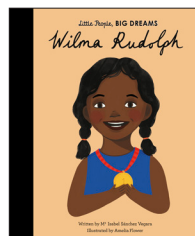
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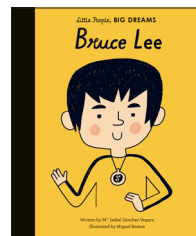
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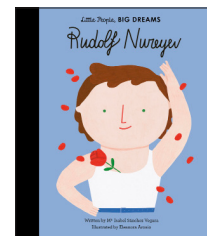
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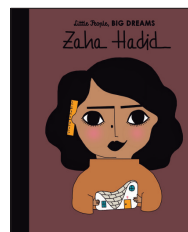
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