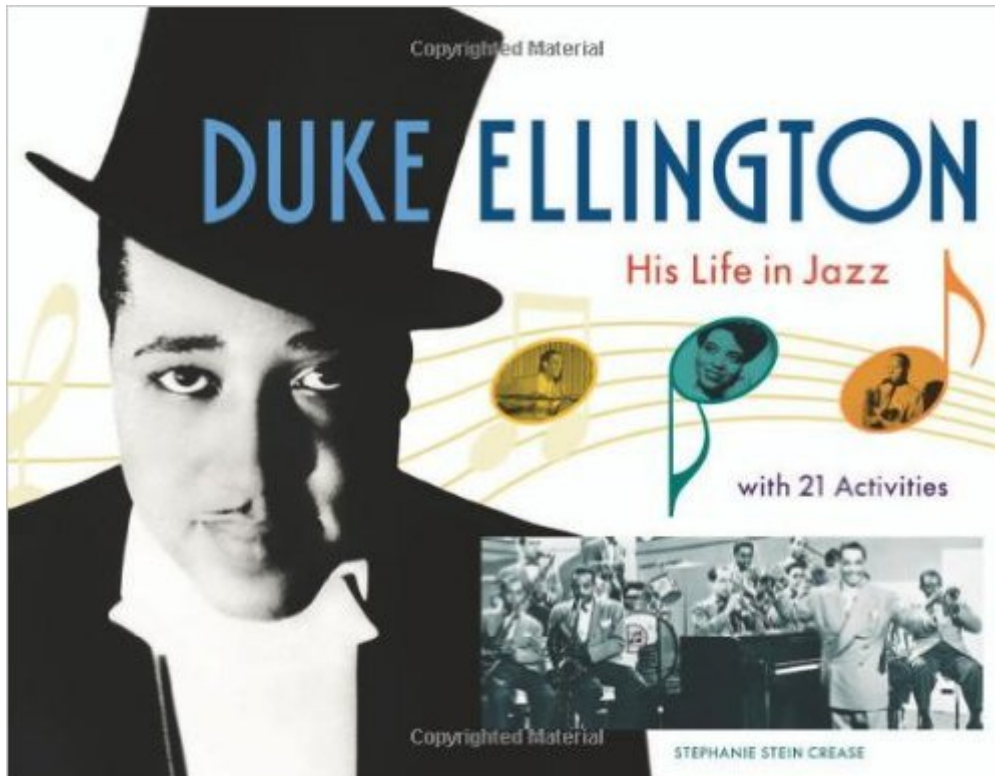


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# Duke Ellington: His Life In Jazz With 21 Activities (For Kids Series)



## Synopsis

Duke Ellington, one of the most influential figures in American music, comes alive in this comprehensive biography with engaging activities. Ellington was an accomplished and influential jazz pianist, composer, band leader, and cultural diplomat. Activities include creating a ragtime rhythm, making a washtub bass, writing song lyrics, thinking like an arranger, and learning to dance the Lindy Hop. It explores Ellington's life and career along with many topics related to African American history, including the Harlem Renaissance. Kids will learn about the musical evolution of jazz that coincided with Ellington's long life from ragtime through the big band era on up to the 1970s. Kids learn how music technology has changed over the years from piano rolls to record albums through CDs, television, and portable music devices. The extensive resources include a time line, glossary, list of Ellington's greatest recordings, related books, Web sites, and DVDs for further study.

## Book Information

Series: For Kids series

Paperback: 140 pages

Publisher: Chicago Review Press; 1 edition (February 1, 2009)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1556527241

ISBN-13: 978-1556527241

Product Dimensions: 11 x 0.4 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (7 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #1,442,118 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #44 in [Books > Children's](#)

[Books > Arts, Music & Photography > Music > Jazz](#) #350 in [Books > Children's Books >](#)

[Biographies > Musical](#) #1786 in [Books > Children's Books > Biographies > Multicultural](#)

Age Range: 9 - 13 years

Grade Level: 4 and up

## Customer Reviews

What a great book to explore jazz through the life of Duke Ellington! The activities are fun and engaging (most are appropriate for the 7 - 10 age group). I like that there is variety in the activities (everything from making instruments to writing lyrics to making corn bread!), so kids can get a more robust hands on learning experience. While this is by no means a stand alone book on jazz, it is a

great introduction to students learning about various types of music, an excellent starting book for someone doing a biography on Duke Ellington, or a jumping off point into the wonderful world of jazz. It would also make a great gift for a young, budding musician as the Duke was a great role model (I haven't read about a drug habit or wife beating or other things that tend to plague musicians of all genres throughout history). While this book could be used in schools, it seems most appropriate for use at home with the family. There are great family activities and the way the book is written, it easily allows for parents and grandparents to expound upon "those days" that don't seem so "walked ten miles to school, uphill, in a snow storm". It allows for some great life lessons as Duke Ellington didn't just happen to be a great musician, he worked hard at it and even when he was very good - he still continued to practice and learn from others to try and get better. Pair it with samples of his music and you have a great family learning project to help bring you closer to your children in a new and exciting way.

This book does contain a biography about Duke Ellington, but it is much more than just a biography. The activities are well thought out, particularly for a group or classroom setting. I purchased this book for teaching about the Jazz Age to a home school co-op class. I believe it is a superior resource than the book suggested by the curriculum that I am using to teach this period of history.

Biographies can have a tough life. Their charms are often lost on young readers who are more focused on the latest hyped-up fiction or eye-catching nonfiction titles. I can see why this is the case - biographies can come across as being more utilitarian than entertaining. *Duke Ellington: His Life in Jazz* tries its best to provide the facts in ways that will appeal to young readers. *Duke Ellington... is* an unquestionably well crafted title. Text that is detailed and accessible, images that are large and crystal clear, and an interactive twist make this title stand out. With over 2,000 compositions and numerous musical achievements, Ellington's body of work was immense. Author Stephanie Stein Crease treats the musician's life and career with obvious admiration. From his early days of playing piano at parties to the formation and growth of his renowned jazz orchestra, Ellington's story is presented in a clear, conversational tone that adds to the overall readability. A time line and a multitude of sidebars help to add context. When I first saw this book, the thing that stuck with me was the "with 21 activities" in the title. I wondered how well this would work. The verdict? Not too shabby. The various, step-by-step Ellington-related activities range from the just for fun (make a concert poster) to more in depth (writing your own blues melody). This mix was a good choice - it allows a wide variety of readers to take part if they like. Musical talent is not required. While it's likely

that only the most interested of young readers will read this title cover to cover, Duke Ellington... will also ably serve students who are looking for facts or working on a biography of the man. If you're looking for an update in your Ellington bio section, this will make an excellent choice.

I bought this book as a resource for my 7th grade music appreciation class. It is an extremely useful book. The activities are creative and doable.

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