

# One People, Many Cultures

**Directions** Some consider jazz music to be the first original American art. Throughout the 20th century, many musicians experimented with jazz music. Read the biographies of two famous jazz musicians. Then answer the question below.

## Duke Ellington (1899–1974)



Duke Ellington began playing the piano when he was six years old. Ellington did not like the piano and quit until he heard a form of jazz called

ragtime. Ragtime was very different from the music that Ellington had studied as a child. He was so impressed by it that he taught himself to play this type of music. Soon Ellington was writing his own music and playing it at high school dances. In the 1920s, he moved to New York City and played with a band. Ellington became famous because his ragtime jazz was different from other artists' music. Ellington added African and Latin music to his arrangements. Over the next few decades, Ellington made records, toured the country, played on American radio shows, and made movies in Hollywood. In 1969, President Nixon awarded Duke Ellington the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

## Ella Fitzgerald (1917–1996)



Ella Fitzgerald never had any formal training as a singer and became one of the world's greatest jazz vocalists. Fitzgerald was born in Newport

News, Virginia, and by 1934 became a popular singer in New York City. Fitzgerald sang with a swing jazz band that played in many of New York's music clubs. At that time, discrimination made it difficult for African American musicians to perform. Fitzgerald's popularity helped open many doors for other African American musicians. Over the next four decades, she made hundreds of records and sang for many of the great jazz musicians, including Duke Ellington. Fitzgerald won many awards for her music, including 14 Grammy Awards.

What contributions did Ellington and Fitzgerald make to jazz music?

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