

Duke Ellington

by Andrea Davis Pickney

You ever hear of the jazz-playin' man, the man with the cats who could swing with his band? He was born in 1899, in Washington, D.C. Born Edward Kennedy Ellington. But wherever young Edward went, he said, "Hey, call me Duke."

Duke's name fit him rightly. He was a smooth-talkin', slick-steppin', piano-playin' kid. But his piano playing wasn't always as breezy as his stride. When Duke's mother, Daisy, and his father, J. E., enrolled him in piano lessons, Duke didn't want to go. Baseball was Duke's idea of fun. But his parents had other notions for their child.

Duke had to start with the piano basics, his fingers playing the same tired tune—*one-and-two-and-one-and-two*. Daisy and J. E. made Duke practice day after day.

To Duke, *one-and-two* wasn't music. He called it an *umpy-dump* sound that was headed nowhere worth following. He quit his lessons and kissed the piano a fast good-bye.

Years later, on a steamy summer night, Duke heard that *umpy-dump* played a whole new way. Folks called the music ragtime—piano that turned umpy-dump into a soul-rousing romp.

The ragtime music set Duke's fingers to wiggling. Soon he was back at the piano, trying to plunk out his own ragtime rhythm. *One-and-two-and-one-and-two . . .* At first, this was the only crude tinkling Duke knew.

⑦ But with practice, all Duke's fingers rode the piano keys. Duke started to play his own made-up melodies. Whole notes, chords, sharps, and flats. Left-handed hops and right-handed slides.

Believe it, man. Duke taught himself to press on the pearlies like nobody else could. His *one-and-two-umpy-dump* became a thing of the past. Now, playing the piano was Duke's all-time love.

"Duke Ellington" from *Duke Ellington: The Piano Prince and his Orchestra* by Andrea Davis Pickney. Copyright © 1998, published by Hyperion Books for Children.

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| <p>1. What is the purpose of the selection?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">A to solve problemsB to teach a skillC to provide informationD to answer a question | <p>2. In the first and second paragraphs, why is the final <i>g</i> left off many of the words, as in "jazz-playin' man"?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">A to make the selection sound more like a poemB to make the selection sound like someone talkingC to get the reader excited about playing the pianoD to show the way that jazz musicians sing |
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3. The fourth paragraph says, “He called it an *umpy-dump* sound that was headed nowhere worth following.” What does “nowhere worth following” mean?
- A It did not seem interesting to him.
 - B It was hard to understand.
 - C It seemed too hard to do.
 - D It was used too much by other people.
4. What does Duke do to become a better ragtime musician?
- A He joins a band.
 - B He reads about ragtime.
 - C He takes piano lessons again.
 - D He practices a lot.
5. In paragraph 7, what are “left-handed hops and right-handed slides”?
- A dances inspired by ragtime
 - B jazz as played by a beginner
 - C a duet played by two jazz musicians
 - D the movement of fingers across piano keys
6. Between the beginning of the selection and the end, how did Duke’s attitude about the piano change?
- A from uninterested to enthusiastic
 - B from disobedient to obedient
 - C from smart to foolish
 - D from sad to happy

End of Set

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EOG Grade 4 Reading Sample Items

Selection Title	Question Number	Correct Answer	Thinking Skill	Objective Number
Duke Ellington	1	C	Analyzing	2.04
Duke Ellington	2	B	Analyzing	3.01
Duke Ellington	3	A	Knowledge	3.01
Duke Ellington	4	D	Knowledge	2.06
Duke Ellington	5	D	Applying	1.03
Duke Ellington	6	A	Analyzing	3.02