

EXPLORE MORE BOOK GUIDE

We've created this guide of resources and suggested activities, paired with the classroom standards they support, to expand student learning and build excitement for this book and IRW program.



HAVE QUESTIONS? Please contact Alison Johnson at IRW, 207-460-6828
ajohnson@islandreadersandwriters.org.



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Getting Started: **BEFORE** reading the book!

Interested in a guided session with a trained facilitator in the VTS process?



Please contact Alison Johnson at IRW: 207-460-6828 or [email](#).



STANDARDS:

SL.1. Prepare for and participate in conversations across a range of topics, types, and forums, building on others' ideas and expressing their own.

SL.2. Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

R.4. Read various texts closely to determine what each text explicitly says and to make logical inferences; cite specific textual evidence to support conclusions drawn from the texts.

R.5. Provide an accurate summary of various texts; determine the central idea(s) or theme(s) and analyze its development throughout each text.

R.6. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

R.9. Assess how perspective or purpose shapes the content and style of various texts

R.10. Evaluate the argument and specific claims in various texts.

What is VTS



Watch this [video](#) to learn more about VTS.

Take a quiet moment to observe the book jacket (cover) while thinking about the following questions.

What is going on in this picture?

*What do you see that makes you say that?
(provide evidence)*

What more can we find?

Teachers Take note:

What words and phrases are used by students?

What details are noticed to convey ideas?

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Meet Steve!

Stephen Costanza has illustrated and written several books for children, including three about music, *Mozart Finds a Melody*, *Vivaldi and the Invisible Orchestra*, and *King of Ragtime*. He studied music and composition, and for a time played piano professionally, performing both ragtime and classical music. He lives on a small island in Maine. Visit him at STEPHENCOSTANZA.COM.



Let's Talk

Throughout this book the author, Stephen Costanza compares Joplin's music to a quilt.

- *Can you find some of these comparisons?*
- *Can you think of reasons why quilts and quilt making are like music and song writing?*

HINT: Think about how the word "piece" is used for both.

Look at the page with the full spread of the train that Joplin rode to Chicago.

- *What do you see in the smoke of that train?*
- *Why do you think the author/illustrator drew the smoke in that way?*
- *Does it remind you of any other artists?*

STANDARDS:

A. *Disciplinary Literacy - Visual Arts: Students show literacy in the art discipline by understanding and demonstrating concepts, skills, terminology, and processes.*

A1 *Artist's Purpose*

A2 *Elements of Art and Principles of Design*

Scott wrote music to go with his childhood chores.

- *Think of chores you do around your house, how would a song done while dusting be different than a song that goes with leaf raking?*

HINT if needed: Think about how each would sound, are they fast (allegro) or slow (adagio), loud (forte) or soft (piano)?

STANDARDS:

B. *Creation, Performance, and Expression – Music: Students create, perform, and express through the art discipline.*

ART EXTENSION:

Think about an object in your environment that gives off smoke. Try drawing the image using shapes like triangles, rectangles, circles and squares and add colors to create your own type of "smoke."

Let's Talk (continued)

As you look at the pictures in this book:

- *Are there places where you think the artist created a sense of movement?*
- *What techniques do you think helped to get the idea of movement across to the viewer?*

HINT if needed: Was it the color? Lines? Texture?

Joplin is often called “a quiet boy” that could make “the piano laugh out loud.” This is what’s called personification.

- *Can you find any other examples in this book or others?*
- *Can you find any metaphors or similes?*
- *Why is this an interesting way of describing someone?*

STANDARDS:

L.2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of Standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

L.5. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening.



Listen to his songs and try to hear this influence.

Joplin often was inspired by sounds from nature and machinery and added this to his music.

- *Can you think of other music that is influenced by machinery or nature?*

STANDARDS:

A. Disciplinary Literacy – Music: Students show literacy in the discipline by understanding and demonstrating concepts, skills, terminology, and processes.
A2 Notation and Terminology

FROM THE STORY:

Scott’s father tells him to go to work for the railroad because so few opportunities existed for an African American man at that time but “courage came on like a head of steam” and Scott decided to hop on that train and let it take him to a place where he could study and perform music.

The setting of this book is the eastern part of state of Texas and a city called Texarkana with a “patch of Texas, a scrap of Arkansas, and a stripe of Louisiana.”

- *Why was this place important in the years that Scott Joplin grew up there?*
- *What makes it unique?*
- *How did the location affect the people that were enslaved there?*
- *Why do you think he needed such courage? What obstacles did Scott have to overcome?*

The book mentioned that “These were the people newly free,” and yet Joplin’s mother worked for a “wealthy white family.”

- *How did things change for African Americans after the emancipation and the celebrations of Juneteenth? How did they stay the same?*
- *Can you find an example in the book where something remained the same for Scott?*

WRITING EXTENSION:

Can you describe something in your classroom using personification? Write a sample.

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Let's Create!

ART:

- [Make a box fiddle](#)

- Make a paper Story Quilt.

Think of a story you'd like to tell through images. It could be a special memory or a story that you imagine. Think of your 5 senses when deciding what to put in your story painting as those senses bring stories to life. Most quilts have a center area with the main image or pattern surrounded by a border of smaller squares, triangles, or other shapes. Draw, paint, or collage your story into the center square. Then use cut paper or draw/paint in your patterned border. You can add words if you like. You could even use multiple squares to piece together a larger story.

STANDARDS:

A. Disciplinary Literacy - Visual Arts: Students show literacy in the art discipline by understanding and demonstrating concepts, skills, terminology, and processes.

GEOGRAPHY:

- Look up the Red River Valley/ Texarkana area of the U.S. Draw a map of the 4 states coming together and creating one city. Make sure you add the Red River. Or, make it local and draw four towns coming together around a river in Maine. Think of it as a quilt like Steve Costanza did in his book and see if you can create a similar image.

MUSIC:

- [Learn a dance](#) -There are many dances mentioned in this book. Pick a style, do some research, learn it, and have fun. Find a partner and practice.

STANDARDS:

A. Disciplinary Literacy - Dance: Students show literacy in the discipline through understanding and demonstrating concepts, skills, terminology, and processes.

B. Creation, Performance, and Expression – Dance: Students create, perform, and express ideas through the art discipline.

E. Visual and Performing Arts Connections: Students understand the relationship among the arts, history and world culture; and they make connections among the arts and to other disciplines, to goal-setting, and to interpersonal interaction.

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Let's Dive Deeper!

- [Ragtime music: Samples of Joplin's work performed by Joshua Rifkin](#)
- [Listen to the opera "Treemonisha," music and words by Scott Joplin](#)
- [Facts about Ragtime for kids](#)
- Joplin's life story revolves around the emancipation of all slaves in Texas known as [Juneteenth](#). Juneteenth was recently made a national holiday. Learn all you can about why this is celebrated. Is there music? What foods are eaten? How was it celebrated in the past? Has that changed?
- Listen to a traditional [Ring Shout with the McIntosh County Shouters](#): Gullah-Geechee Ring Shout from Georgia
- [A little history of reconstruction](#)

Let's Read More

