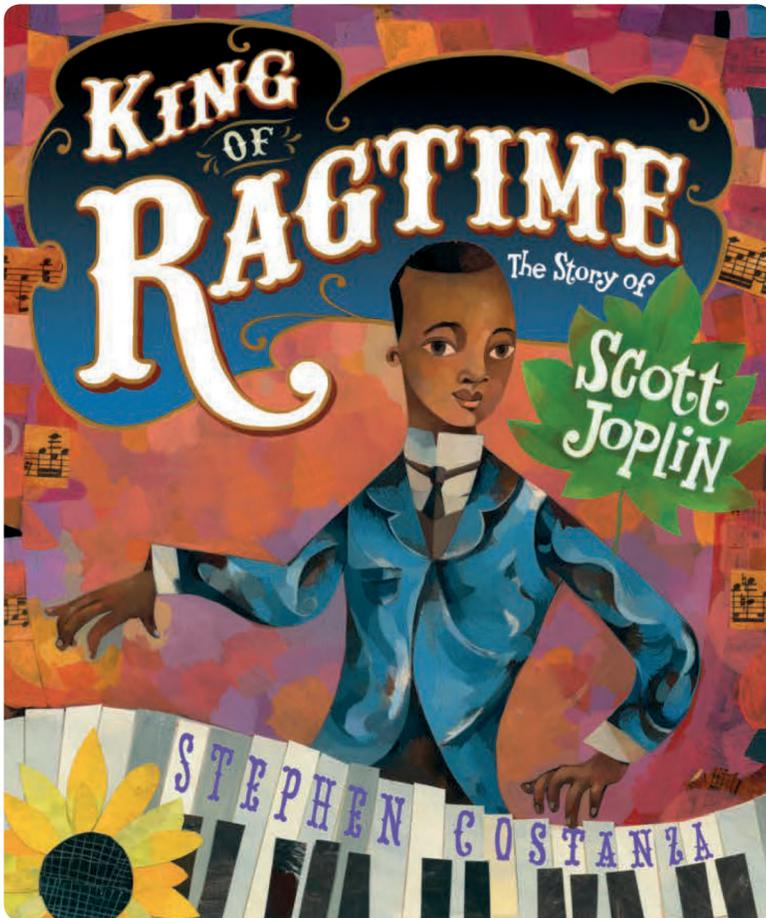


Getting Started:

## BEFORE reading the book!

Use the Visual Thinking Strategy (VTS) questions below to engage and orient readers and to help guide a group discussion. Begin by taking a quiet moment to look closely at the book jacket allowing time for observation and contemplation of the images.

(IRW can provide a facilitated discussion if you'd like. Please contact [ALISON JOHNSON](#) via email or at: 207-460-6828.)



- *What is going on in this picture?*
- *What do you see that makes you say that? (provide evidence)*
- *What more can we find?*

If virtual, ask your students to summarize, (or you paraphrase if synchronous), their ideas in short notes in a Google Doc or other format (Padlet, etc.) Build on the group ideas and communal knowledge during your discussion.

*What words and phrases are used by students?*

*What details are noticed to convey ideas?*

*This book has great end papers so take note!*

ELA Standards:

- Speaking and Listening – Comprehension and Collaboration (5th-8th)
- Language – Conventions of Standard English (5th-8th)
- Writing – Text Types and Purposes (5th)

## KING OF RAGTIME



### 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](http://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? Think about how the word "piece" is used for both.

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? Think about how each would sound, are they fast (*allegro*) or slow (*adagio*), loud (*forte*) or soft (*piano*)? Can you make up your own "ditty for dusting" or "waltz for washing"?

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? Try a drawing like this yourself, use shapes like triangles, rectangles, circles and squares and add colors to create your own "smoke."

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

Joplin often was inspired by sounds from nature and machinery and added this to his music. Listen to his songs and try to hear this influence. Can you think of other music that is influenced by machinery or nature?

## KING OF RAGTIME



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?

[HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=PMATL7N\\_-RC](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PMATL7N_-RC)

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. Why do you think he needed such courage? What obstacles did Scott have to overcome?

The book mentions 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?

### LET’S CREATE:

Make a box fiddle:

[HTTPS://WWW.TSO.COM.AU/WP-CONTENT/UPLOADS/2014/10/TISSUE-BOX-VIOLIN-AND-PAPER-PLATE-TAMBOURINE-INSTRUCTIONS.PDF](https://www.tso.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/tissue-box-violin-and-paper-plate-tambourine-instructions.pdf)

Red River Valley/ Texarkana Look up this 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.

Learn a dance -There are many dances mentioned in this book. Pick a style, do some research, and learn it. Find a partner and practice. [HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=DPCBMWAWEDI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DPCBMWAWEDI)

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.

## KING OF RAGTIME

### LEARN MORE:

Ragtime music: Samples of Joplin's work performed by Joshua Rifkin:

[HTTPS://WWW.NONESUCH.COM/JOURNAL/JOSHUA-RIFKIN-SCOTT-JOPLIN-PIANO-RAGS-RECORDING-GRAMMY-HALL-FAME-2020-01-17](https://www.nonesuch.com/journal/joshua-rifkin-scott-joplin-piano-rags-recording-grammy-hall-fame-2020-01-17)

Listen to the opera "Treemonisha," music and words by Scott Joplin:

[HTTPS://WWW.INTERLOCHENPUBLICRADIO.ORG/SHOW/KIDS-COMMUTE/2021-01-20/KIDS-COMMUTE-TREEMONISHA-WEEK](https://www.interlochenpublicradio.org/show/kids-commute/2021-01-20/kids-commute-treemonisha-week)

Facts about Ragtime for kids:

[HTTPS://KIDS.KIDDLE.CO/RAGTIME](https://kids.kiddle.co/Ragtime)

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 [HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=UXPU517U8C](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UXPU517U8C)

A little history of reconstruction:

[HTTPS://TEXASOURTEXAS.TEXASPBS.ORG/THE-ERAS-OF-TEXAS/CIVIL-WAR-RECONSTRUCTION/](https://texasourteas.texaspbs.org/the-eras-of-texas/civil-war-reconstruction/)

### READ MORE:

