

# Little People, BIG DREAMS™

## TEACHERS' GUIDE



Aretha Franklin

Little People, BIG DREAMS™

Written by Maria Isabel Sanchez Vegara

Illustrated by Amy Blackwell

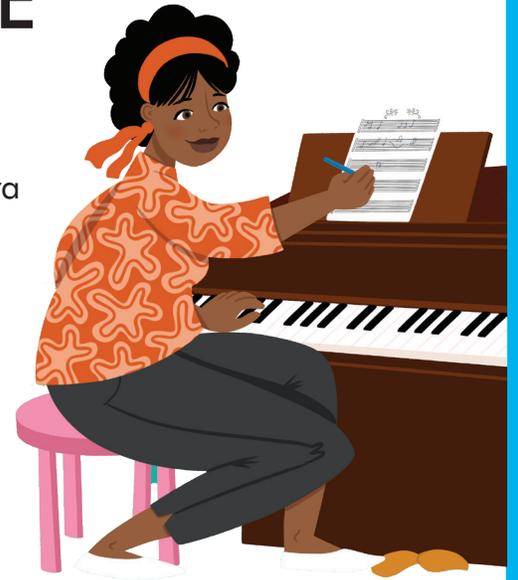
\$15.99 US/\$18.99 CAN

ISBN: 9780711246867

Ages: 4 to 8 (Grades: PreK to 2)

32 pages

Hardcover, 7.6 x 9.5 inches



### LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

As a young girl with a passion for singing, Aretha Franklin might not have imagined that she would go on to become the first woman inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame and be known as the “Queen of Soul.” Surrounded by love and support, Aretha was encouraged to use her powerful and unique voice to lift spirits and bring joy to her listeners. By combining her natural talent with steadfast dedication, Aretha achieved remarkable accomplishments, and her music continues to inspire all who hear her voice.

### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS IN THIS UNIT

1. What is Aretha Franklin famous for doing?
2. As a child, what kind of support did Aretha receive from her parents?
3. How did Aretha learn to play the piano?
4. What effects did Aretha’s choir singing have on her listeners?
5. Why did Aretha try several different styles of music?
6. Of all her many accomplishments, what was Aretha’s greatest honor?

### CLASSROOM DISCUSSION TOPICS

1. Early in the story, Aretha’s father is described as believing “that music could move not just people’s hearts, but the world.” (p. 2) Ask the students what they think that means. In what ways do they think music can change the world? How did Aretha’s special voice help achieve change?

Ask the students to list ways in which they could help a friend who was feeling uncomfortable because they felt different.

2. The book explains that “Aretha used a special recipe when writing her songs: they had to talk about everyday ups and downs. That’s what soul was all about!” (p. 21) Ask the class how those kinds of lyrics helped her speak to lots of different listeners from many backgrounds. What does the class think soul music is?

3. Aretha sang at President Barack Obama’s inauguration. The book describes this particular presidential inauguration as “one of the most important moments in history.” (p. 25) Ask the students why they think Aretha considered this to be such a momentous occasion. To add further perspective to this discussion, play a clip of Aretha’s inaugural song to the class.

4. Throughout her career, Aretha earned awards and recognition for her work, from numerous Grammy awards to being the first woman to join the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame! Ask the students to list the character traits Aretha had that helped her become such a success. In what ways do they think these traits, as well as the boundaries she broke, can inspire children today?

## STUDENT ACTIVITIES

1. Test Your Musical Ear! Aretha learned to play piano “by ear,” or just by listening to music. If you have access to a piano, keyboard, or even xylophone, (either physically or online) play an easy tune and see if the students can copy it just by listening. If you are new to music, get help from your school’s music department or a musical app.

2. R-E-S-P-E-C-T: One of Aretha’s biggest hits was a song called “Respect.” Play the song for the class. Find the lyrics online and have the students read them. Ask them why they think respect is important. As a class, list the traits that indicate respect. Post them in the classroom and add to them as more ideas arise.

3. Draw Sound: Several of the illustrations in the book depict music and the act of singing. Ask the students to consider the ways the illustrator portrayed something you hear through something you see. Have them select one of their favorite songs, and create a drawing of that song. It can be a person (themselves, a friend or relative, or even the song’s creator) singing or playing an instrument, or it can simply be the shapes, colors, or patterns that the song inspires.

4. Dance Party: Aretha had multitudes of hit songs. Find a greatest hits playlist (or create your own) and let the students dance to Aretha’s amazing music. Ask them how her songs make them feel.



Guide created by Shannon Gallagher

<http://quartokno.ws/LPBD>

[Littlepeoplebigdreams.com](http://Littlepeoplebigdreams.com)



Frances Lincoln  
Children’s Books

