

## Featured Artifact: Ella Fitzgerald Record

Era 8: The Great Depression and World War II (1929-1945)

<http://historyexplorer.americanhistory.si.edu/resource/?key=5102>



**Look at the artifact presented to you. In a few sentences, respond to the following questions:**

**Describe:** Objectively describe the artifact. What do you think it is made of? What does it look like? Does it look old or new? Is it intact, or is it damaged in some way?

**Analyze:** When, where or how do you think this item was used? What kind of person may have created or used this item? What significance do you think the object held, either for the creator or the user? Do you see words or images on the artifact that connect it to others (besides the creator and user)?

.....  
**Share your conclusions with a partner, then discuss the following:**

**Evaluate :** Justify why you came to those conclusions about the artifact. What further questions do you have about the object? Of those questions, which could you solve by observing the object in person and which would you need to solve with research?

.....

## Background Information

Over the course of her 60-year career, Ella Fitzgerald (1917-1996) became known to fans and colleagues as "The First Lady of Song." Her rise to international fame as a jazz and popular singer coincided with the rise of an American entertainment industry that brought music to millions through concerts, sound recordings, film, radio, and television. In 1938, Fitzgerald came up with the idea for song called "A-Tisket, A-Tasket," basing her lyric on a 19th-century nursery rhyme. Her 1938 Decca recording of the song in time became a million-seller.

**After reading and considering the background information, compose a response to the following:**

**Analyze:** Address the following object-specific questions:

- Have you seen a recording in this format before? How may this have been different from the mediums with which you are familiar?
- Listen to a recording of "A-Tisket, A-Tasket." How would you describe the tone and mood of this recording? How might it have been different that the original nursery rhyme?

**Synthesize:** What does this object tell us about the era in which it was created, or the American experience as a whole? How would you describe the social, economic, or political climate of America during this time? What connections can you make between this object and other things that you have seen, read, or experienced?

**Analyze:** Address the following era-specific questions:

- How did the popular culture of this era reflect the changing social and cultural environment?