

Aretha Franklin

Fact File

Name: Aretha Louise Franklin

Born: 25th March 1942 in Tennessee, USA

Instruments: Vocals and piano

First album: 'Songs of Faith' recorded in 1956

Died: 16th August 2018



Aretha Franklin was an American singer, songwriter, actress and pianist. She also spent most of her life campaigning for equal rights for women and Black people, writing songs which became important parts of social change.

Early Life

Born at her family home in Tennessee, USA, Aretha was raised by her mother, Barbara, who was a talented piano player and singer. She had three sisters called Erma, Carolyn and Carl Ellan and two brothers called Vaughn and Cecil. Her father, Clarence, worked as a **minister**.

New Bethel Baptist Church

Aretha and her family moved from Tennessee to New York when she was two years old. However, by the time Aretha was five, they had moved again to Detroit where their father became the minister at the New Bethel Baptist Church.

Shortly after this, Aretha's parents separated and her mother moved back to New York, where Aretha would go to stay during the school holidays. Aretha spent the rest of the year living with her father and her grandmother, Rachel, helped to look after her. Aretha's father gained the nickname 'the man with the million-dollar voice' due to his emotional and inspirational **sermons**; he became so well-known that his home was visited by various famous people, including popular **gospel** singers and activists such as Dr Martin Luther King Jr.

Musical Beginning

1952 Aretha wanted to be just like the gospel singers who would visit her home so when she was ten, she began to learn songs, which she performed in front of **congregations** at many different churches; she began singing solos and even taught herself to play the piano 'by ear', which means that she listened to records and tried to copy them.

1954 When Aretha was just 12 years old, a **record label** realised that her voice was special and began to help her to record her singing and begin playing the piano with recording equipment at the New Bethel Baptist Church.

1956 Aretha recorded her first album called 'Songs of Faith' and began to travel the country, performing alongside many famous people, including Dr Martin Luther King Jr.

A Lifetime's Success

Aretha's music career continued for nearly 60 years during which time she released 112 songs which hit the charts and sold more than 75 million records worldwide.

- 77 of her songs made the top 100 in the charts.
- 17 made the top ten.
- 20 became number one hits.

Aretha also received many awards for her music, including 18 Grammy Awards (and a further 26 nominations) and three American Music Awards. In 1981, she was given a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame and even had an asteroid in space named after her by NASA. In 1987, she became the first woman to be added to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. In 2005, Aretha was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, which is the highest **civilian** award of the United States, for helping to shape America's artistic and cultural heritage.

Aretha Franklin will forever be known as the Queen of Soul by the millions of people who loved her music.

Glossary

civilian: A person not in the armed services or the police force.

congregations: A group of people who gather together for religious worship.

gospel: Teaching about Jesus Christ.

minister: A person who teaches and leads services in a Christian church.

record label: A recording company who produce and release music.

sermons: A talk on a religious or moral subject.

Questions

1. Where was Aretha Franklin born? Tick one.

- New York
 Tennessee
 Detroit
 Hollywood

2. Match the year to the event in Aretha Franklin's life:

1942

Aretha is given a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

2005

Aretha is born in Tennessee, USA.

1956

Aretha records her first album, 'Songs of Faith'.

1981

Aretha is awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

3. How many songs did Aretha Franklin release during her career?

4. What nickname was Aretha's father given?

5. Look at the paragraph starting 'Aretha also received many awards...'. **Find** and **copy** one word which means the same as **legacy**.

6. Why do you think Aretha Franklin chose to sing in the gospel style?

7. Apart from her music career, what else is Aretha Franklin known for?

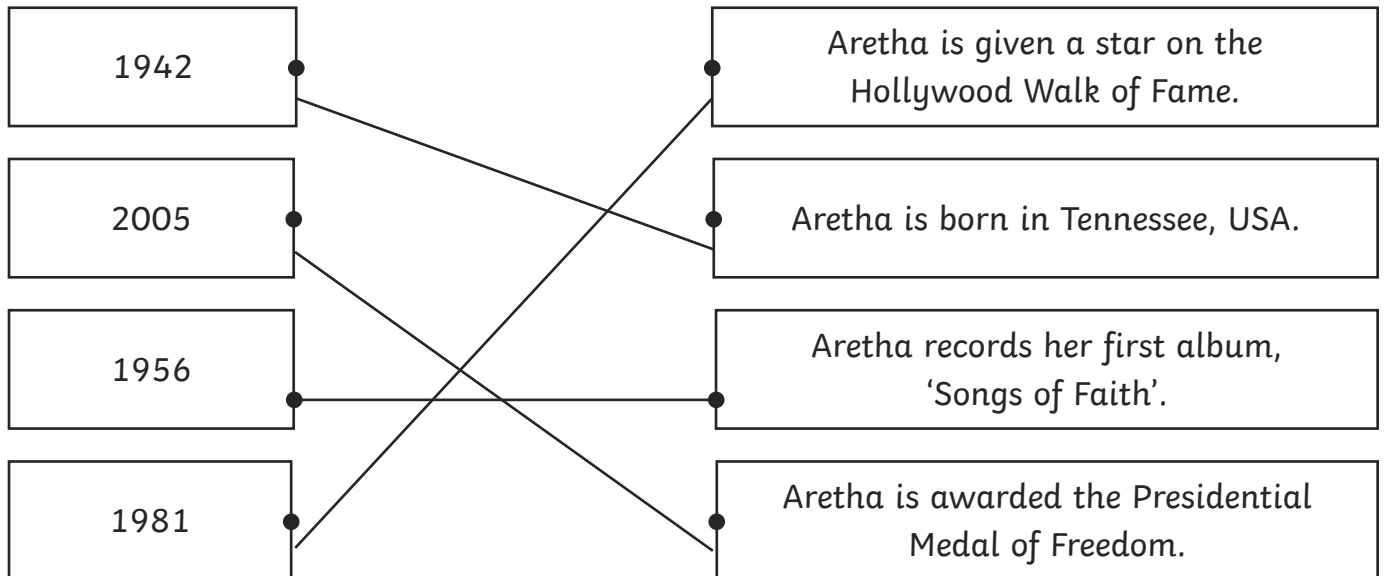
8. Why do you think Aretha Franklin is remembered as **the Queen of Soul**?

Answers

1. Where was Aretha Franklin born? Tick one.

- New York
 Tennessee
 Detroit
 Hollywood

2. Match the year to the event in Aretha Franklin's life:



3. How many songs did Aretha Franklin release during her career?

Aretha released 112 songs.

4. What nickname was Aretha's father given?

The man with the million-dollar voice.

5. Look at the paragraph starting 'Aretha also received many awards...'. **Find** and **copy** one word which means the same as **legacy**.

heritage

6. Why do you think Aretha Franklin chose to sing in the gospel style?

Pupils' own responses which could include references to her father being a minister, her involvement with the church from an early age, meeting gospel singers at home and at church.

7. Apart from her music career, what else is Aretha Franklin known for?

Pupils' own responses, such as: Aretha was known for her work on equal rights for

women and Black people.

8. Why do you think Aretha Franklin is remembered as **the Queen of Soul**?

Pupil's own responses, such as: I think Aretha Franklin is remembered as the Queen of Soul because she was a very successful singer, had 112 songs released and won numerous awards for her music and equal rights campaigning.

Aretha Franklin

Aretha Franklin was an American singer, songwriter, actress and pianist who also spent most of her life campaigning for equal rights for women and Black people; she wrote songs which became important parts of social change.

Childhood

Born on 25th March 1942 at her family home in Tennessee, USA, Aretha Louise Franklin was raised by her mother, Barbara, who was a talented pianist and singer, alongside her three sisters, Erma, Carolyn and Carl Ellan, and two brothers, Vaughn and Cecil. Her father, Clarence, worked as a minister.

Aretha and her family moved from Tennessee to New York when she was two years old. However, by the time Aretha was five, they had moved again to Detroit where their father became the minister at the New Bethel Baptist Church.

Shortly after this, Aretha's parents separated and her mother moved back to New York, where Aretha would travel to stay during the school holidays. Aretha spent the rest of the year living with her father and her grandmother, Rachel, helped to look after her and her siblings. Gaining the nickname 'the man with the million-dollar voice' due to his emotional and inspirational **sermons**, Aretha's father became so well-known that his home was visited by various famous people, including popular **gospel** singers and activists such as Dr Martin Luther King Jr.

Musical History

Keen to be just like the gospel singers who would visit her home, Aretha began to learn songs at the age of ten, which she performed in front of **congregations** at many different churches; she began singing solos and even taught herself to play the piano 'by ear', which means that she listened to records and tried to copy them.

In 1954, when she was just 12 years old, a **record label** realised that Aretha's voice was extraordinary and began to help her to record her singing and playing the piano with recording equipment at the New Bethel Baptist Church.



By 1956, Aretha had recorded her first album called 'Songs of Faith' and began to travel the country, performing alongside many famous people, including Dr Martin Luther King Jr.

A Lifetime's Success

Continuing for nearly 60 years, Aretha's music career saw many successes including 112 songs which hit the charts, and the sale of more than 75 million records worldwide. Aretha was one of the most successful soul singers of all time with 77 of her songs making the top 100 in the charts, 17 making the top ten and 20 becoming number one hits.

Aretha also received multiple awards for her music, including 18 Grammy Awards (and a further 26 nominations) and three American Music Awards. In 1981, she was given the honour of a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame and even had an asteroid in space named after her by NASA. In 1987, she became the first woman to be inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. In 2005, Aretha was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, which is the highest **civilian** award of the United States, for helping to shape America's artistic and cultural heritage.

Known as the Queen of Soul by the millions of people who loved her music, Aretha Franklin will be remembered forever.

Glossary

civilian: A person not in the armed services or the police force.

congregations: A group of people who gather together for religious worship.

gospel: Teaching about Jesus Christ.

minister: A person who teaches and leads services in a Christian church.

record label: A recording company who produce and release music.

sermons: A talk on a religious or moral subject.

Questions

1. What occupation did Aretha Franklin's father have? Tick one.

- politician
- singer
- minister
- doctor

2. Number the events from 1-5 to show the order in which they happened.

- Aretha released her first album, 'Songs of Faith'.
- A record label realised that Aretha's voice was special and helped her record her music.
- Aretha Franklin was born in Tennessee, USA.
- Aretha had an asteroid named after her by NASA.
- Aretha Franklin moved to New York with her family.

3. How many of Aretha Franklin's songs made the top 100 in the charts?

4. Name three of the awards Aretha Franklin received in her lifetime

1.

2.

3.

5. Look at the paragraph starting 'In 1954, when she was just 12 years old...'. Find and copy one word which means the same as special.

6. Why do you think the gospel style influenced Aretha's singing?

7. In addition to her music career, what else is Aretha Franklin known for?

8. Why do you think Aretha's father was given the nickname 'the man with the million-dollar mouth'?

9. Why do you think the term, the Queen of Soul, is associated with Aretha's memory?

Answers

1. What occupation did Aretha Franklin's father have? Tick one.

- politician
- singer
- minister
- doctor

2. Number the events from 1-5 to show the order in which they happened.

- 4** Aretha released her first album, 'Songs of Faith'.
- 3** A record label realised that Aretha's voice was special and helped her record her music.
- 1** Aretha Franklin was born in Tennessee, USA.
- 5** Aretha had an asteroid named after her by NASA.
- 2** Aretha Franklin moved to New York with her family.

3. How many of Aretha Franklin's songs made the top 100 in the charts?

77

4. Name three of the awards Aretha Franklin received in her lifetime.

Any three of the following: Grammy Awards, American Music Awards, a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, an asteroid named after her, Presidential Medal of Freedom, inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

5. Look at the paragraph starting 'In 1954, when she was just 12 years old...'

Find and copy one word which means the same as **special**.

extraordinary

6. Why do you think the gospel style influenced Aretha's singing?

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think Aretha's singing was influenced by the Gospel style due to her father being a minister, her involvement with the church from an early age and meeting gospel singers at home and at church.

7. In addition to her music career, what else is Aretha Franklin known for?

Pupils' own responses, such as: In addition to her music career, Aretha is known for her work on equal rights for women and Black people. She campaigned for equal rights and wrote songs about social change.

8. Why do you think Aretha's father was given the nickname 'the man with the million-dollar mouth'?

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think Aretha's father was given this nickname because he had a 'rich' voice that people wanted to listen to, as well as being emotional and inspirational in his sermons.

9. Why do you think the term, the Queen of Soul, is associated with Aretha's memory?

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think the term, the Queen of Soul, is associated with Aretha's memory because she was a very successful singer, released 112 songs and won numerous awards for her music and equal rights campaigning.

Aretha Franklin

An American singer, songwriter, actress and pianist, Aretha Franklin also spent most of her life campaigning for equal rights for women and Black people, writing songs which became important parts of social change.

Childhood

Born on 25th March 1942 at her family home in Tennessee, USA, Aretha Louise Franklin was raised by her mother, Barbara, who was a talented pianist and singer, alongside her three sisters, Erma, Carolyn and Carl Ellan, and two brothers, Vaughn and Cecil. Her father, Clarence, worked as a minister, which is a person who teaches and leads services in a Christian church.

Aretha and her family moved from Tennessee to New York when she was two years old. However, by the time Aretha was five, they had relocated again to Detroit where their father became the minister at the New Bethel Baptist Church. He often preached on social justice, instilling a sense of the importance of civil rights in his young children. Following the subsequent separation of her parents, Aretha would spend the holidays in New York, where her mother now lived; she spent the rest of the year living with her father while her grandmother, Rachel, helped to look after her and her siblings. Gaining the nickname 'the man with the million-dollar voice' due to his emotional and inspirational sermons (talks on a religious or moral subject), Aretha's father became so well-known that his home was visited by various famous people, including popular gospel singers and activists such as Dr Martin Luther King Jr. The New Bethel Baptist Church was the first place that Dr King gave his "I Have a Dream" speech in 1963, which Aretha heard and found inspiration from.



Musical Origins

Yearning to be just like the gospel singers who would visit her home, Aretha began to learn songs at the age of ten, which she performed in front of congregations (groups of people gathered together for religious worship) at many different churches she visited with her father; she began singing solos and even taught herself to play the piano 'by ear', which means that she listened to records and tried to copy them.

In 1954, when she was just 12 years old, a record label (a recording company who produce and release music) realised that Aretha's voice was unique; they began to help her to record her singing and play the piano with recording equipment at the New Bethel Baptist Church where she recorded nine songs. By 1956, Aretha had recorded her first album called 'Songs of Faith' and began to travel the country, performing alongside many famous people, including Dr Martin Luther King Jr.

Continuing for nearly 60 years, Aretha's music career saw many successes including 112 songs which hit the charts and the sale of more than 75 million records worldwide. One of the most successful soul singers of all time, Aretha saw 77 of her songs make the top 100 in the charts, 17 reach the top ten and 20 become number one hits.

Due to her success and popularity, Aretha also received multiple awards for her music, including 18 Grammy Awards (with a further 26 nominations) and three American Music Awards. In 1981, she was bestowed the huge honour of a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame; she even had an asteroid in space named after her by NASA. In 1987, she became the first woman to be inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. In 2005, Aretha was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, which is the highest civilian (a person not in the armed services or the police force) award of the United States, for helping to shape America's artistic and cultural heritage with both her music and civil rights work.

Known as the Queen of Soul by the millions of people who loved her music, Aretha Franklin's legacy will be remembered forever.



Questions

1. Which of these awards did Aretha Franklin not receive?

- Presidential Medal of Freedom
- Nobel Peace Prize
- Grammy Award
- American Music Award

2. Match the number of songs to the correct fact.

77

112

more than 75
million

20

Number of songs
Aretha Franklin released.

Number of Aretha's songs that
became number one hits.

Number of Aretha's songs that made
the top 100 in the charts.

Number of records
Aretha sold worldwide.

3. What was historic about Aretha's induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame?

4. Look at the section with the sub-heading **Musical Origins**. What do you think the word **yearning** means?

5. Look at the section starting with 'In 1954, when she was just 12 years old...'
Find and **copy** one word which means **one of a kind**.

6. Why do you think Aretha Franklin chose to sing in the gospel genre of music?

7. Where did Aretha get her sense of importance about civil rights from? How did it impact her life?

8. Why do you think Aretha's father acquired the nickname 'the man with the million-dollar mouth'?

9. Why do you think Aretha Franklin's legacy remembers her as **the Queen of Soul**?

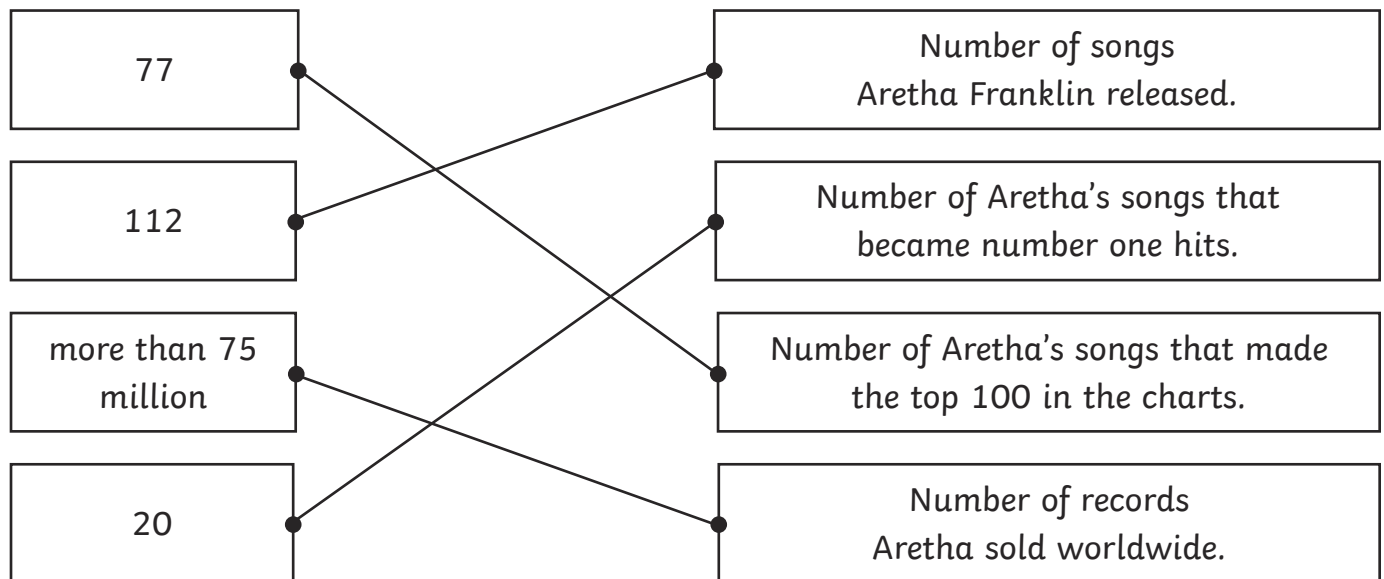
Write a short paragraph summarising the achievements and legacy of Aretha Franklin.

Answers

1. Which of these awards did Aretha Franklin not receive?

- Presidential Medal of Freedom
- Nobel Peace Prize
- Grammy Award
- American Music Award

2. Match the number of songs to the correct fact.



3. What was historic about Aretha's induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame?
She was the first woman to be inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

4. Look at the section with the sub-heading **Musical Origins**. What do you think the word **yearning** means?

Pupils' own responses, such as: desiring; wanting; craving; longing.

5. Look at the section starting with 'In 1954, when she was just 12 years old...'
Find and copy one word which means **one of a kind**.

unique

6. Why do you think Aretha Franklin chose to sing in the gospel genre of music?

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think Aretha chose to sing in the gospel genre because her father was a minister and she was involved with the church from an early age, meeting gospel singers at home and at church.

7. Where did Aretha get her sense of importance about civil rights from? How did it impact her life?

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think Aretha got her sense of importance about civil rights from her father's sermons and his preaching on social justice or Dr Martin Luther King coming to her house as a child. It influenced her to campaign for equal rights for women and Black people.

8. Why do you think Aretha's father acquired the nickname 'the man with the million-dollar mouth'?

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think Aretha's father acquired this nickname because he had a 'rich' voice that people wanted to listen to, as well as being emotional and inspirational in his sermons.

9. Why do you think Aretha Franklin's legacy remembers her as **the Queen of Soul**?

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think Aretha is remembered as the Queen of Soul in her legacy because she was a very successful singer, released 112 songs and gained numerous awards for her music and equal rights campaigning etc.

10. Write a short paragraph summarising the achievements and legacy of Aretha Franklin.

Pupils' own responses, such as: Aretha was for her reputation as the Queen of Soul, her work on civil rights and her many awards which have contributed to her legacy.