

Ready for Ragtime

Eric had been practicing all week. He was ready for his piano lesson with Mr. Muller. He knew his scales. He knew his piece of music.

The piece he was working on was a waltz. He was tempted to play it fast. That was more fun. But Mr. Muller wanted him to play it the way it was written. Slow, slow, slow.

Eric's mom gave him a metronome. It had a metal stick that waved back and forth to keep tempo. "I used this metronome when I played piano as a girl," said his mom.

She showed him how to set it to the right tempo. It made a noise as it waved back and forth. "One, two, three," Eric counted. The metronome helped him slow down. He hoped Mr. Muller would be happy.

"Scales first," said Mr. Muller during the lesson. Eric played. He only made one mistake.

"Now the waltz."

Eric thought of the metronome. Tick tock, tick tock. He played slowly.

"Beautiful!" said Mr. Muller. "I think you're ready."

"Ready for what?" asked Eric.

"Ragtime!" said Mr. Muller.

"What's that?" asked Eric.



“It’s a style of music,” his teacher explained. “It’s fast.”

“Yes!” Eric cheered.

Mr. Muller played a piece called *The Entertainer*. It was awesome. Eric couldn’t wait to learn it. And he couldn’t wait to set his metronome to go fast, fast, fast!



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NAME: _____ DATE: _____

1. What speed does Eric like to play the waltz?
 - a. Fast
 - b. Slow
 - c. Medium
 - d. He doesn't like playing the waltz

2. What helps Eric keep to the right tempo?
 - a. His mom
 - b. Scales
 - c. Mr. Muller
 - d. The metronome

3. What style of music is *The Entertainer*?
 - a. Scales
 - b. A waltz
 - c. Ragtime
 - d. Jazz

4. Why does Mr. Muller say that Eric is ready for ragtime?
 - a. Because Eric made a mistake on his scales
 - b. Because Eric practiced and played correctly
 - c. Because Eric only likes fast music
 - d. Because Eric was nice to Mr. Muller

Instructions for teachers:

These questions can be used to assess understanding of the reading passage.

The item in bold is the correct answer for each question.

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 - a. **Fast**
 - b. Slow
 - c. Medium
 - d. He doesn't like playing the waltz
2. What helps Eric keep to the right tempo?
 - a. His mom
 - b. Scales
 - c. Mr. Muller
 - d. **The metronome**
3. What style of music is *The Entertainer*?
 - a. Scales
 - b. A waltz
 - c. **Ragtime**
 - d. Jazz
4. Why does Mr. Muller say that Eric is ready for ragtime?
 - a. Because Eric made a mistake on his scales
 - b. **Because Eric practiced and played correctly**
 - c. Because Eric only likes fast music
 - d. Because Eric was nice to Mr. Muller