

## Sample School Project Proposal Sample

### 1. Project Title

How Ragtime Music Began in Missouri

### 2. Project Applicant

Molly Smith, Advanced Music, Prairie High School, Somewhere, MO

### 3. Reason for the Project:

I am writing this paper to satisfy the requirements for my Advanced Music class. I will be applying to colleges as a music major in piano, but I also want to emphasize my love of music history and will use information from this project for my college entrance essays.

### 4. Knowledge of Subject

I know a lot about American jazz, but I don't know a lot about ragtime, which was also a very popular style of music around 1900. From what I have listened to, ragtime has syncopation and is difficult to play, but I don't know how ragtime got started or who started it.

### 5. Preliminary Research/Literature Search

I have read a few books about ragtime's history, including *Rags and Ragtime* by David Jasen and Trebor Jay Tichenor, *They All Played Ragtime*, by Rudi Blesh, and "*Blind*" Boone: *His Early Life and His Achievements* by Melissa Fuell. There are several others I will need to read, and CDs I have to listen to which will include music by John Boone, Scott Joplin, and James Scott. I will visit the State Historical Society Library since they have a good collection of ragtime music histories. I have emailed Jim Lang, who has made recordings of ragtime music, and I will interview him by phone. My project will use history, music analysis, and interviews to support my research.

### 6. Project Description

Ragtime has been played for more than 140 years, and one of the places that helped to make ragtime popular around the world was Missouri. For my project, I will research how ragtime began in Missouri. I will read about ragtime's history, listen to recordings, and interview Jim Lang, a musician who performs it. I will look at three of the most famous Missouri composers of ragtime (John Boone, Scott Joplin, and James Scott), and will write about their life stories and their music, and how they helped to shape ragtime. Finally, I will discuss how these composers are still performed today, and why ragtime was important.

### 7. What You Will Produce During this Project/Outcomes

I will write a paper of at least 2500 words about my topic, and include photographs and other illustrations about ragtime and ragtime composers in Missouri. My paper will include a timeline of ragtime, resources for readers to find and listen to ragtime, and an edited interview with Jim Lang.

## **8. Timeline or Tasks**

I have a full semester to research and write this paper. I will begin in the fall:

- September     Research ragtime history. Visit the State Historical Society Library for information  
                         Interview Jim Lang by phone.
- October         Write first draft by October 21, and get feedback from my mentors.
- November      Write second draft and get feedback from my mentors.
- December      Complete final writing and turn in paper by December 10.

## **9. Oversight**

Glenda Rigby is my senior project advisor. She is a music teacher at my school, an expert in music history and has helped to establish a local ragtime festival. She will review my research, read and comment on my drafts and rewrites.

Dr. Mike Weill is my piano instructor. He has a lot of background in ragtime music, and he will read and comment on my paper.

## **10. Possible Problems**

Since I am covering a lot of information, I will have to really focus my work. I also have to make sure I read as many of the ragtime history books as possible so that I have a good foundation for my writing. The biggest concern I have is not sticking to my timeline, so I will check in a lot with my mentors and they will help me keep moving on my work.